

*Jesus Christ
the Eternal Sacrifice*

(for Youth Studies)

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

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**The art depicting the crucified Christ is also 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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Dedication

I dedicate this study to the children of the church, with the prayer that those who read these pages will be drawn closer to God, to His Son and our Brother, and to His Holy Spirit. Especially dear to me are our own grandchildren: Stephanie and Alex Gibson; Erin and Jonathan Choate; and Savannah, Seth, and Arwen Choate — and *great-grandchildren*, Riley and Jack Kessler. We may not leave them anything of this world's goods, but if I can share these precious insights of truth, and strengthen their walk with God, no greater gift could be given.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to Alex, our teenage grandson, who read the manuscript and offered some very helpful suggestions. I appreciated the insight of the younger generation in the formation of the book.

With all my heart,
Amie

Publisher's Statement

Who is Betty Choate? For one thing, she is my wife. She is also the mother of our children — Sheila, Steve, and Brad, and Darla — all of whom are faithful members of the Lord's church. And Betty is a co-worker in all of our office work, in the writing, printing and distribution of books, and in the production of our quarterly magazine, *The Voice of Truth International*. For more than 40 years she has worked with me in several Asian countries as missionaries.

Who is Betty Choate? She is a student of God's word and of Christian evidences. She has an active mind, always reading and studying, seeking a better understanding of the truth of God. As a result, she has written many articles and numerous books. The one she says is most precious to her is entitled **Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice**.

Betty wrote the study on Christ's sacrifice several years ago. It has had three printings in the US, two in India in English and in local languages, and has been widely distributed in other countries of the world. Members of the church have praised it highly, expressing their gratitude for having their minds opened to the great sacrifice Jesus made in order that they might be saved and have the hope of eternal life.

The original book was written with adults primarily in mind. But Betty kept thinking of how much those truths had meant to her, in deepening her love for God and her willingness to surrender totally to His will. She thought of all the young people who are only beginning their walk with God, and she thought of how much more meaningful their lives would be if they could learn more exactly what their salvation had cost and of the great love that undergirds that sacrifice. She was convinced that if young people could have an understanding of these truths at an early age, a far greater percentage would remain faithful throughout their lives, and a far greater percentage would be active in winning other souls to Christ.

So Betty has written **Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice (for youth studies)** — the same beautiful lessons, but with a different format. We would encourage the use of the book in teen and college classes in the church; in the home for family devotionals; and for individual study. It is our joy to share these truths with young minds who are searching for deeper insights into God's heart.

J.C. Choate
Winona, MS 38967
June 26, 2006

Introduction

To the Students

No question is more important for a human to answer than, “Who is my Savior, and what did my salvation cost?” For most young people who will study this book, the answer is easy: Jesus Christ; and the cost was His death on the cross. But is that answer complete?

I believe the Scriptures tell us much more about the price Jesus paid for our souls than we usually understand. And I believe that if young Christians could realize their cost to God, and the tremendous outpouring of love that moved Him to pay that price, their love for Him in return would be multiplied. This stronger love would change their lives and deepen their dedication, so that fewer would be lost to the world along life’s highway.

That is the reason I have wanted to write this book: to create a deeper love in the next generation of Christians, so that God can work more fully and freely through them to bring this wonderful truth to the whole world!

To the Teachers

This study and its understanding are so vital that I would suggest that it be allocated two quarters in the year’s class schedule. It is most important that a true understanding be reached in the minds of the students before the subject is closed and their attention moves on to other Biblical topics.

The format for the book has been a quandry for me: I had teenagers to read the material, and they pointed out words and concepts that they felt needed to be explained. To make room for those explanations, without interrupting the message of the main text, the side-bars were added. Questions were also added, to encourage class discussions and, hopefully, to achieve a better understanding of the concepts. I feel that both of these tools are needed, but — conversely — when I was re-reading the text, the side-bars and questions also seemed to be the interruption to the main message that I had feared.

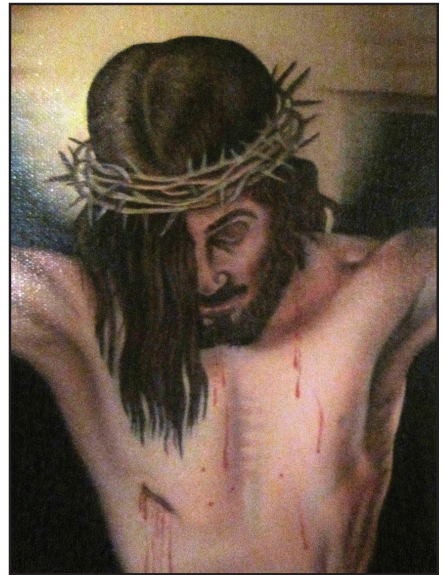
So what to do? I would strongly encourage teachers to use the added material but to keep a sharp focus on the flow of the text itself. Perhaps it would be good to read through the entire chapter with the students, and then go back and review, with coverage of questions and side-bars in the second reading.

Table of Contents

1. Who Is the Lord?	1
2. Before He Was Born	7
3. The Emptying.....	15
4. The Brother of Man	25
5. Sent By the Father.....	34
6. The Commitment.....	42
7. The Death.....	48
8. Was Physical Death the Only Cost?	67
9. After Death	74
10. Our Response	81
11. The Memorial.....	90
12. The Reigning Lord.....	100
13. The Eternal Son.....	113

Who Is the Lord?

Chapter One



I never intended to doubt or question anything my Dad and Mom believed. They're Christians, and they've been teaching me about God and "Jesus Loves Me" from the time I began to talk.

So I didn't have any real problems with my faith. Well, I thought I didn't. But in school I'd learned a lot about evolution. Science teachers were always saying, "The universe is 12 or 14 billion years old," or "The oldest human bones date back 3.5 million years," or "The Cambrian Age began 550 million years ago." They talked about the advancement from monkeys to ape men and finally to hominids — cave men, and then to "modern man".

I knew the Bible didn't teach any of those things, but the times I'd questioned the theories hadn't been very successful. I said, "I read in the paper that some scientists are saying

◆ **Common sense and observation teach us several things about life forms:**

1. There is no evidence to show that "kinds" of life have ever crossed their individual boundaries; where is the "missing link" between trees and men?

2. There is no mystery about various animals becoming extinct in today's world. A thousand years from now, children may marvel at evidences that such an animal as an elephant ever existed — its days seem to be numbered.

3. So, there should be no great mystery about the many varied life-forms which once existed in the world but are no more. Changes bring about changes, and life moves on.

For Discussion:

1. Is it wrong for Christians to question in sincerity, "What is the basis of my faith?" _____ "Is it 'blind' faith or built on knowledge?" _____
2. Why should we question, or why should we not?
3. Can the theory of evolution be proved? _____
4. Can the Biblical account of God and creation be proved? _____

The “evolutionary chain of man” reads this way:

Fossil name: Removed from the list by scientists in:

Gigantopithecus	1977
Ramapithecus	1981
Australopithecus	Discounted by Richard Leakey
Homo Habilis	1995
Java Man	Homo Erectus—modern man
Peking Man	Homo Erectus—modern man
Neanderthal Man	Modern man
Cro-Magnon Man	Modern man
Pitldown Man 1953	— declared a hoax
Nebraska Man	a pig’s tooth

The result is that there is no established evolutionary chain!

See “**Bones of Contention**” by Marvin L. Lubenow and “**The Truth about Human Origins**” by Brad Harrub, Ph.D., and Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

What is the Big Bang Theory?

The belief that a microscopic pinpoint exploded to become all that exists in the universe.

Hinduism is an ancient religion, pre-dating written history. Probably one-fourth of the people of the world would call themselves Hindus. India is the home of this religion.

The caste system (dividing people into groups based on birth and occupation), **reincarnation and re-birth** (belief that when the body dies the soul is re-born into another life as another individual, based on the good or evil of the past life), and **the worship of idols** and **“holy men”** are some of the basic doctrines of Hinduism.

the earth may be much younger than they thought” and, “The new telescopes out in space are sending back information that conflicts with many of the currently-held theories” and, “Anyway, no one has ever explained where the matter came from to make the ‘Big Bang’.” But most of the teachers weren’t interested in any answers from the Bible.

For myself, though, since the “scientific” theories and the figures on the millions and billions of years were pretty wild and always seemed to be changing, I decided not to hang my faith on them.

But there was another kind of problem. In our school we get more than classes and sports. Because there are kids from different countries (and some don’t even know much English!), we get a mini-view of the world and other cultures and religions.

I’ve been a new kid in a new school and I know how alone you can feel, so when two new boys joined my class this year, I offered to show them to their class rooms. We’ve gotten to be pretty good friends, and I’ve learned a lot about them.

Ram is from India. While most people in the US would say that they believe in God and the Bible, most people in India are Hindus. Ram is a Hindu and is named after one of their gods — which really seems strange to me!

Mohammed is from India too, but he’s a Muslim, and he’s named after the man who started that religion.

For Discussion:

5. Which of the two “faiths” offers the best explanation for the beginning of matter? _____ of life? _____ of intelligence? _____ of conscience? _____

6. Since all of these things exist, do they demand that any explanation for the existence of matter and the universe also include an explanation for how and when such phenomena began? _____

I'd never known much about Hinduism, or about Islam, as Mohammed calls his religion. As we've grown to be friends, sometimes we've spent the night at each other's houses. That gives us some good time to talk.

Mohammed knows a lot about Muslims and their "holy book", the Koran. "Allah is God," he said, "and Mohammed is His last and greatest prophet. Our father Abraham lived, then your Jesus, but now Allah's prophet is Mohammed."

"So you believe in God, the same one in the Bible?" I asked.

"Yes, God is Allah — the same God of Abraham. But we Arabs descended from Ishmael. And Mohammed gave us new laws, not the same ones your Jesus gave."

"But you believe in Jesus, too?"

"Of course! He was a holy prophet. But he was not, as you call him, 'the Son of God'. God is not human. He was not married. He never had a wife. How could He have a son? To say such a thing would be to say there are two Gods. Our maulvi teaches us that that is blasphemy."

"But how can you believe part of what the Bible says about Abraham and Jesus, if you don't believe Jesus is God's Son? In the Bible, God's voice was heard from heaven, and He said about Jesus, **"This is My beloved Son . . ."** (Matthew 3:14).

"That part of the Bible has been changed," Mohammed assured me.

I was surprised that Ram didn't altogether reject Jesus either. Maybe because the whole

The religion of Islam was begun in the seventh century by an Arab named Mohammed. The cities of Mecca and Medina became holy places to his followers.

Mohammed and his people claim to be descendants of Abraham through Ishmael. Their name for God is "Allah". Many of their teachings are based on the Old Testament, but it is claimed that Mohammed spoke the messages that were written down in the book called the Koran.

Islam was spread by violence, eventually covering much of India, the Middle East, and part of Europe. Almost one-fourth of the world's population would call itself "Muslim". Followers are divided primarily into two groups: the Shi'as and the Sunnis.

Mullah: a man learned in Islamic law.

Imam: a leader in prayers in the mosque (place of Muslim worship.)

We live in a small world, and we rub shoulders daily with people from other countries. It is important that we know something about their land of birth, as well as their religion, if we are to be "good neighbors". It is especially important for Christians to know something about other religions, if we are to be able to share the Gospel of Christ with those people.

For Discussion:

7. Look up Islam and Hinduism in an encyclopedia or on the internet and write a paragraph about these two religions.
 8. Concerning the question of "God", how do these religions differ?
-



Ganesh, Hinduism's elephant god.



A line-up of Hindu gods.



Buddha, who is now worshiped by his followers as a "god".

ISKCON, International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna), is one of the divisions of Hinduism. It requires an austere life in which all personal possessions are given up, and adherents refrain from talking about the

world has been affected by His existence — time, itself, is dated from His birth, and the laws of “civilized” countries have been influenced by His teachings — maybe that’s why all religions honor Him at least as a “prophet”.

When we were at Ram’s house, he showed us a little room with a shrine and a statue of a god with an elephant head. “That’s Ganesh,” Ram explained. “He’s the god of prosperity. We pray to him to be successful in business or some new thing we’re doing.”

“But why does he have an elephant head?” I asked.

“The story goes that when his father, Shiva — the god of destruction — saw his new baby, he was so excited that he forgot that his third eye — the eye of destruction — was open. So when he looked at the baby, its head was destroyed. Then he sent his servant out to take the head of the first thing he saw — and the first thing he saw was an elephant! So, that’s how Ganesh got his head!”

“So how many gods are there in Hinduism?” I asked, puzzled.

“Who knows?” Ram answered, laughing. Then he turned serious. “Actually, when I asked my Mom that question, she said that there’s only one god — that nothing really exists except God, and that it is God’s presence in everything that makes them seem to exist.”

“You mean, God takes the form of animals and other things?”

“Yes, God in everything makes it seem real. We believe that what we think we are experiencing is no more than a dream or a play in the mind of God. And since nothing

really exists except God, and He is playing all the parts in His dream, we can worship anything and think of it as God.

“We Hindus believe God has shown Himself in different ways. So we worship Him as Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. But at times when people needed new direction, God was born as a human to give special guidance. We call Buddha ‘Lord’, and also He came as ‘Lord Krishna’, and even as Jesus, in one of those incarnations.”

“So you worship all of them as God?” I asked.

“Yes, and many others too. That’s how we have ‘holy’ men, too.”

“What are they?”

“They are men who have meditated and prayed and have become, as we say, ‘God-conscious’ — believing that God is in them and speaks through them — so that they are worshiped as God. Even you and I are ‘God’ because, as I told you, there is nothing real except God. Most people have not reached the ‘enlightened’ state where they realize that they are God. But even now there are many ‘holy men’ in the world — a few in your country, but many in India. They have become enlightened and know that they are God. So people worship them.”

“How do you get to be ‘enlightened?’” I asked.

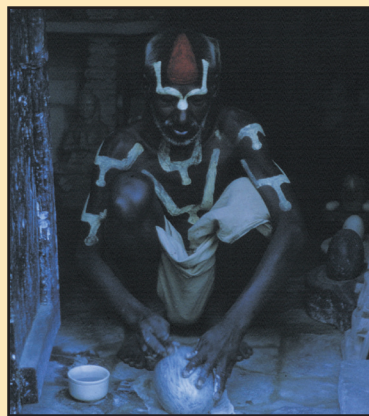
“Through many re-births and through doing good deeds so that one’s next birth may be better,” Ram explained.

“Then in Hinduism you don’t have a Savior?”

“How can God have a savior? Each one must do his own good deeds and set himself free from the bad karma of all his past lives.”

outside world or associating with non-members. Men shave their heads, except for one lock of hair, while women braid their hair. Men wear a saffron dhoti and women wear the Indian sari.

The “New Age” movement is an Americanized form of a mixture of Eastern religions and practices: Hinduism, Buddhism, Gnosticism, yoga, transcendental meditation, etc. Two of its basic teachings are karma and reincarnation. One’s Karma is the accumulation of good and bad deeds. The doctrine of reincarnation says that the soul is reborn, according to one’s karma, to a worse life or a better life, perhaps millions of times, until “enlightenment” frees the soul of the punishment of rebirth. “Holy men” are believed to be enlightened.



A Hindu “holy man”.

9. Have you ever seen a “holy” man, or a TV documentary on the subject?

10. Have you noticed such Hindu words as “karma”, “nirvana”, and “mantra” in songs, books, movies, and TV programs? _____ Can you list other Hindu religious concepts and words that are gradually being added to the American speech? _____

“New Age people talk about re-birth and karma. Is ‘New Age’ the same as Hinduism?”

Ram laughed. “I think it is your new American brand of our ancient Hinduism. Many of the teachings are the same, but they mix it up, too.”

“Christians believe that there is only one God,” I answered, “but there’s a big difference. We believe that God created the world and everything in it, but we don’t believe that those things are actually God. We believe God is the Creator, not the created. So we are not supposed to worship anything but Him — not even a statue made to represent Him.”

That night as I was getting ready for bed, I kept thinking, “There has been a lot of ‘mixing up’. How can all of these religions be so different, and teach so many different things, and yet all of them accept Jesus as ‘Lord’, even though they say there are others as great or greater than He is?”

I got out my Bible, to double-check on my memory. Yes, Matthew 3:16,17 was there,

Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.”

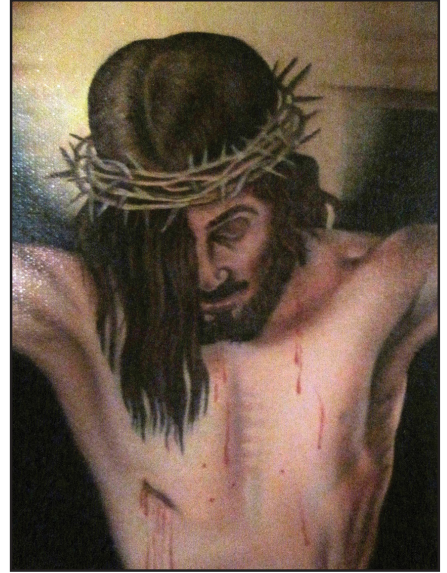
I read Jesus’ own words about Himself:

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

So, I thought, “Either Jesus is the one and only Lord, the only mediator between people and God — as He claimed to be — or else He was an impostor. For sure, His own words say He was not a prophet in the Moslem religion or a ‘Lord’ along with others in Hinduism. He claimed to be ALL, or He was nothing but a liar and a fake.”

For Discussion:

- 1. Some religions, particularly Hinduism and Islam, grow through physical birth. Historically, Islam, has also been spread by the sword, where conquered peoples either became Muslims or they were executed. If we believe that Christianity is the true religion, why do we not spread it by force?**
- 2. Since Christianity is spread through teaching and conversion, what responsibility do you have as a Christian?**
- 3. What preparation is required before a Christian can effectively teach someone else?**



Before He Was Born

Chapter Two

I thought I'd never go to sleep that night. So many questions kept turning over in my mind. Who is Jesus? When did He begin? Or did He have a beginning? Has He always been there with God, as God's Son? But Mohammed and other Muslims believe that God cannot have a Son because He was never married. Are they right?

I decided I had a lot of studying to do, and a lot of questions to ask my Dad and Mom and our preacher. Remembering the ready answers Ram and Mohammed had given me, the thought nagged my mind that they knew more about their "holy" books than I knew about the Bible. That made me a little ashamed because I knew God deserved better than that. I apologized to Him and asked Him to help me understand the answers to my questions.

For days after that I read and looked up things in the concordance and discussed the verses with Dad and Mom and anybody else who happened to be around. I surprised myself, being so interested in what I was reading. Sitting in classes and just listening to teachers hadn't seemed nearly as interesting as getting down and digging for some answers I really needed.

One night I had looked up so many verses and stayed up so late, I dozed off right there in the chair. I had the coolest dream about the things I'd been studying.

I dreamed I was drifting and falling and swirling and turning through a wet darkness. And out of the darkness, a blinding light! A thundering voice of power filled my ears:

"Let there be light!" (Genesis 1:3).

And the darkness was swallowed up in warm brightness.

This lesson is not intended to teach that we gain our knowledge of God's word or of the history of what He has done in the world through dreams. The imagined scenario is simply used in order to develop a mental image of the flow of events as they were prophesied and then were fulfilled, particularly in the life of Christ.

In my dream, I knew somehow I was in the presence of God. Familiar words from the Scriptures came to my mind:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ... and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters ...” (Genesis 1:1,2).

God, in creation, speaking the reality of the universe into existence!

“But what’s this I’m hearing?” I wondered, as again and again the Voice spoke,

“Let there be a firmament” “Let the dry land appear” and each time He spoke, what He commanded happened!

Through the mist, a figure stood before me.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“I am John, ‘the Beloved’. I would answer your questions. My account of Jesus Christ begins with these words:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

“‘The Word’? Who is He?” I asked.

“He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made ... (John 1:2,3). And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father . . .” (John 1:14).

“Then the One of the Godhead who has been speaking — the One called ‘the Word’ — was born as Jesus?”

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? _____
-

“Yes,” answered John.

“All things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16,17).

The image of John faded, and I stood there in the mist, thinking about what he had said. All around me I could feel the presence of God — God, His Word, and His Holy Spirit: three persons of one essence, working together in one power, one mind, one goal, to bring the creation into existence.

“But *the Word* spoke!” I said in amazement, “the same One Who was born as *Jesus!* All the time when I’ve been reading about God in the Bible, I thought it was talking about God, the Father! But sometimes it was meaning Jesus, as ‘the Word!’”

As if in answer, ghostly figures joined me in the mist. One of them began to speak:

“I am the prophet Isaiah,” he said. “These words were given to me:

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: “I am the First and the Last; Besides Me there is no God . . .” (Isaiah 44:6).

“But in the revelation given to me,” (I recognized the apostle John again), “it was our Lord Jesus who spoke the same words of Himself:

“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” (Revelation 1:8).

“And I recorded that it was the Lord who *redeemed* His servant Jacob,” Isaiah continued.

“Say, ‘The Lord [Jehovah] 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 48:20b,21).

“I am the apostle Paul,” spoke a voice behind me. “The Spirit gave me the explanation that

“. . . 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).

For Discussion:

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

A.

B.

Some of the Old Testament references to “my Angel”, “the Angel”, “the Angel of the Lord”, “the Angel of His Presence”:

“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

“Well! I didn’t know that!” I exclaimed, really surprised. “So Jesus was in the cloud and in the pillar of fire, leading the people of Israel out of Egypt, as their *redeemer!*”

Another man began to speak. His voice was strong, even though he was old and his hair was white. “I am Moses. I saw the flame of fire in the bush on the mountain of God, and One called ‘the Angel of the Lord’ appeared to me there.”

“Was he Michael or Gabriel?” I asked.

“When He called my name — ‘**Moses! Moses!**’ — and I answered, ‘**Here I am!**’ He said,

“I am the God of your Father — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6).

“I hid my face because I was afraid to look upon God.”

I was doing some fast thinking. “Then ‘the Angel of the Lord’ was really God?”

“I asked Him, ‘**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?**’

“He answered me,

“I am who I am Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you,” (Exodus 3:13,14).

The Apostle John stepped forward. “But when Jesus told the Jews,

“Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad’

For Discussion:

5. As a child, when you learned 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)? _____

6. 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.

“... the Jews answered, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?’

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM’” (John 8:56-58).

“So Jesus called Himself ‘I AM’, the same as ‘the Angel of God’ — the same as God talking to Moses!” I exclaimed in surprise. “I didn’t know that! Did the Jews realize what He was claiming?”

“They took up stones to throw at Him,” John answered, “because they said He was blaspheming, making Himself God!”

“Then they *did* understand that He was saying He was the God in the burning bush, and *they didn’t believe Him!*”

“Yet,” Isaiah spoke up, “often in the prophecies, the Holy Spirit who directed our writing had been referring to Jesus when He spoke of ‘Jehovah’, ‘Lord’, and ‘God’. These words were given to me:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” (Isaiah 40:3,4).

Another figure stepped forward. “I am Matthew, the apostle of Jesus who was the tax collector. The Holy Spirit used my pen to write the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.”

“This is he [John the Baptist] who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight’ (Matthew 3:3).

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of Whom I said, “After me comes a Man Who is preferred before me, for He was before me.”’” (John 1:29,30).

“I am David, the king,” spoke another voice. “The Holy Spirit raised a question in my psalm,

“... and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory” (Psalm 24:9,10).

A man stepped out of the mists. “But in my letter, called the book of James, I was guided to write,

“... our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory ...” (James 2:11).

For Discussion:

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

“I wrote also about ‘the Lord of hosts’,” Isaiah said:

“The Lord of hosts, Him shall you hallow.... He will be a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense ...” (Isaiah 8:13,14).

A new voice spoke up. “I am Peter. Few Israelites who read Isaiah’s words would have understood them. The explanation was given to me:

“Therefore, to you who believe, He 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 offense’ (1 Peter 2:6-8).

“A puzzling thing was written in one of my psalms,” David said:

“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 have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness ...’” (Psalm 45:6,7).

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].

Through the shadows I saw a dim form. It said, “To me God said those same words, but they were spoken **as to His Son, Jesus Christ** — the Word, come down in the flesh!” (Hebrews 1:8,9).

The figure faded, and I stood alone in the still darkness. In my mind rang the words I had been hearing: the Old Testament prophecies and statements about “the Lord” and “Jehovah” and “God”, and the inspired verses in the New Testament which said the prophets had been speaking about the coming of Jesus!

I tried to remember the Bible stories about the Angel of the Lord. Someone of the appearance of a man, with two angels, had talked to Abraham by the terebinth trees of Mamre

For Discussion:

10. In Vine’s Word Dictionary, look up “Lord”, “Jehovah”, and “God”. Find Old Testament references using these words.

11. How many of them can you identify as speaking of God the Father?

12. How many would seem to be speaking of the Word, Who would be born as Jesus?

(Genesis 18). Was He the same One Who had told Manoah that Samson would be born (Judges 13:3)? I wondered how many other times I had read of Him, thinking only of an angel, when — really — He was One of the Godhead!

This One who was sent in these other cases — was He the same as the Angel of the Lord who spoke to Moses through the burning bush? Was He the same Lord Who led the children of Israel out of Egypt and then cared for them in the wilderness for forty years? Was He the same One described by Paul as the spiritual Rock which traveled with the Israelites in the wilderness? (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

The next day after school I decided to go by the preacher’s office and talk to brother Winters.

“What brings you here?” brother Winters asked when he saw me at the door.

“I had some questions. Some of my friends at school don’t believe in Jesus, and I’ve been doing some studying about Him myself.”

“That’s great, Anthony! Most of us don’t try hard enough to understand what the Bible says about the Godhead and about Jesus. Have a seat! Now what are your questions?”

“Well, here in the first chapter of John, it says,

In the beginning 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 (John 1:1-3).

“That was talking about Jesus, wasn’t it — telling how He was with God in the beginning?” I asked.

“Yes. Colossians 1:15-17 explains that Jesus is

... the image of the invisible God ...

and that

“... by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or

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.

principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

“Was He the One Who talked to Moses from the burning bush and said,

“I AM the God of your father ... (Exodus 3:6) and I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of Canaan ...?”

“That would seem to be the explanation Paul was making in 1 Corinthians 10:4.

“... 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.”

“But if Jesus is the One of the Godhead who’s talking and working in many of the Old Testament passages, why didn’t I see that, as I do when I read the New Testament? In the Old Testament why does it always seem like the One who was talking was — well, was God, the Father ?”

“Because Jesus had not yet emptied Himself, to be born as a human! During that time He *sounded* like God, speaking with God’s *voice and authority*, because He was *equal* with God!

“There are many Scriptures to be studied on that point, Anthony. Do you want to come back after school tomorrow, and we’ll see what the Bible says about it?”

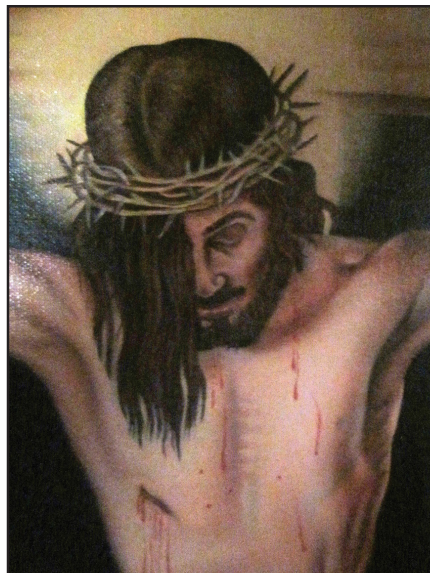
“Sure,” I answered. “That would be a lot of help.”

For Discussion:

- 1. Discuss in class one of the Old Testament scriptures, along with the New Testament passage which shows that the reference was fulfilled in Jesus.**
- 2. Can you locate verses that speak of the One who accompanied the Israelites? What was He called?**
- 3. In these verses, discuss in class the evidences that the person might be a created angel, or that He is one of the Godhead.**

The Emptying

Chapter Three



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.

“Here’s the problem people have in understanding what the Scriptures say about Jesus,” brother Winters explained the next afternoon as we began our study. “They read about Him in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — and the pictures of Him there shape their thinking about Him both before He was born to Mary and after He ascended to God, following His resurrection from the grave.

“For instance, Anthony, how do you imagine Him before He came into the world?”

“Well — I suppose, as the Son of God, at God’s right hand,” I answered.

“Many people would give the same answer, because they see Jesus only through the ‘glasses’ of the New Testament! But if you could erase from your mind all that the New Testament reveals about Him, you wouldn’t think of Him that way at all! The Old Testament doesn’t show Him as ‘the Son’, and He’s not described as sitting at God’s right hand!”

“He isn’t?” I asked, puzzled.

“No. Just as we were discussing yesterday, in the Old Testament the Word is shown then as God, and with the same voice and authority. In

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.

Exodus 3, we read, ‘... **God called to him from the midst of the bush.**’ And when God spoke, He said, ‘**Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand in holy ground.**’

“That statement doesn’t sound like Jesus talking, does it? It sounds like God, the Father. In fact, in the next verse (6), He said,

“I am the God of your father — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God.

“But *Jesus* didn’t warn people to stand away because nearness to Him was to be standing on holy ground; and no one was afraid to look at Him,” I said.

“Yet, as we discussed yesterday, in John 8:56-58, Jesus identified Himself with the One who had spoken to Moses, and in 1 Corinthians 10:4, Paul said that Christ was the One who was with the Jews in the exodus from Egypt,” explained brother Winters. “So in trying to understand Jesus, we have to remember that there are at least five distinct periods of His existence!”

I was surprised at that. “What are they?” I asked.

Brother Winters wrote on his board:

First Period: 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, substance, the power, 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**.

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.

"Do you see, Anthony, that in order to be our Savior, many changes have taken place in His existence? That's why we have to read the Scriptures *closely*, being sure to put each part in its proper place. He is *always* Deity — **One of the Godhead** — but He wasn't actually *the Son of God* until He was born in Bethlehem.

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.

For Discussion:

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

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

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.

“So that’s why He sounds so different in the Old Testament from the way Jesus sounds in the New Testament! And that’s why we can read the Old Testament and not even think that Jesus was there!”

“Yes, you’re right. Philippians 2:5-8 explains what happened:

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, according to the American Standard translation], taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

“So He was *equal* with God. But what does it mean, that He **emptied Himself?**” I asked.

“Well, let’s think a little,” brother Winters answered. “As a human you are an immortal soul and a physical body. But you are also your beliefs, convictions, your values, morals and standards.

These things determine the kind of person you are. In addition, you are whatever powers and capabilities you possess. If you were president of a company, you would have that authority. If you were a computer programmer, you would have knowledge and control in that area.

“In the same way of thinking, how did the Word empty or limit Himself when He was born as Jesus?” brother Winters asked.

“The first thing I think of,” I answered, “— *it blows my mind* — how could **God be a baby and live in a human body?**”

“You’re right, Anthony. Just think how hard it would be even for you or me to turn backward and put ourselves in a position of helpless dependence

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?

like a human baby. That would be a terrible loss. But the great God-Spirit who had the power to create all things did that for us. He limited Himself so that He could be born as a human and could grow in mind and body just like all humans do.”

“There’s another way He emptied Himself,” I said. “He had all the power of God, but when He was born as a baby, He had no powers at all.”

“Right again!” brother Winters laughed. “As a human He was dependent on God, just as we are. That’s what it means in Hebrews 2:17 where it says He was made in all things like His brethren.

“Let’s think a little deeper, Anthony. People often describe Jesus as 100% God and 100% man. But the Scriptures don’t really teach that. Look up the verse, Hebrews 10:5, where the writer discusses the sacrifice of the body of Christ for the sins of the world.”

Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.

“The following verses explain that the sacrifices of the old law could not take away sin, but the sacrifice of the body of Christ was sufficient to do that. And these verses show us that the “Me” who was talking — the Word, the Spirit-Being of the Godhead — left Heaven to come to dwell in a human body which had been especially prepared for Him.

“Now, people sometimes think that if Jesus was 100% human then He had a human body and a human soul, and if He was 100% God then He was just like He had been from eternity, with all of His power and authority. They would say that the only difference was that He was temporarily living ‘in disguise’, so to speak, in a human body, and was sometimes behaving like God and sometimes behaving like a human.”

“So how is that not the right understanding?” I asked, puzzled.

“Didn’t we just read that it was *a body* that was prepared, not a whole human individual?” brother Winters smiled.

“Yes.”

“And so *the Word* came to inhabit *a physical body* that had been prepared for Him — He was the spirit-part of Jesus, instead of a human soul. And as we

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? _____

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.

already discussed, when the Word was born into a physical body, **He emptied Himself . . .**"

"Yes!" I exclaimed, seeing the point. "He was not using His powers as God, so it is not accurate to describe Him as 100% God!"

"A better description would be *the emptied Word in a human body* — one whole Person, whom God had specially formed to do a special work," brother Winters agreed.

"But I don't understand some things, brother Winters. If Jesus had laid aside His powers and did not use them while He was in the world, how did He raise people from the dead and do all of the other miracles?"

"This is another point the Scriptures explain, but we have to notice closely," brother Winters answered. "Because people *assume* Jesus was just like He had been — as the Word, in Heaven — they assume that it was by *His power* that all of the miracles were done. But do you remember what happened when Jesus was baptized?"

"The Holy Spirit came, in the shape of a dove."

"Yes, and John 3:34 says,

For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

"That means that there was no limit to Jesus' use of the powers of the Holy Spirit. But have you ever thought of what a strange thing it was for **God the Father** to give the **Holy Spirit** to **God the Son**? If Jesus was 100% God, why would He have needed the power of the Holy Spirit?"

"I hadn't thought about that," I admitted. "Oh, I know! He had emptied

For Discussion:

11. A good description of Jesus would be, "The _____ Word in a _____ body."

12. By Whose power do people usually assume Jesus performed His miracles? _____

13. Whom did God give to Jesus at the time of His baptism? _____

14. By Whose power did Jesus say He did His miracles? _____

Himself — wasn't using His own powers — so God gave Him the Holy Spirit to do the miracles!"

(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."

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

"Now we've come to another place, Anthony, where we'll be confused if we don't think carefully."

"What's that?"

"Well, since Jesus had the Holy Spirit without measure, does that mean that He just breezed through life and troubles and temptations by the strength of the Holy Spirit? Some would say so. But if He was strengthened and protected always by supernatural power, how could it be said that He was made in all things like His brothers?"

"I don't know. It seems like a contradiction."

"Again, we have to pay attention. Jesus' work as the Savior was to bring God's message to the lost, and to convince people that He had come from God. The Holy Spirit empowered Him to do that, through the use of miracles.

"But His daily, personal life was lived as Jesus Christ, the emptied Word, the Brother of man. When He faced temptations or struggles in life, He faced them as all humans do — from His own integrity and decisions.

"Do you remember how He answered temptation on the mountain after His baptism? "**It is written ...**" — by going to God's word, just as we have to do! He was also strengthened by frequent communion with God in **prayer** (Luke 6:12). And twice, at the end of these struggles, we read that **angels** came to Him and strengthened Him (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43)."

"But angels don't help us," I objected.

"Hebrews 1:14 says they do," brother Winters countered. "Not that they appear before our eyes as shining beings with wings — we don't see them, as

For Discussion:

15. Did the Holy Spirit miraculously help Jesus to overcome the trials and temptations of His human existence? _____

16. Why did Jesus perform miracles? _____

17. How did Jesus face the temptations and struggles of life? _____

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?



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.



spirit-beings — but those verses don't say that He saw them either. But somehow they did strengthen Him, Anthony.

"Have you thought about what a strange statement that is: that *angels* could provide strength for *Deity*? This is another evidence of just what it means when the Scriptures say that He emptied Himself."

"So, was He not God anymore?" I asked, puzzled.

"To answer that question, we have to do some more careful reading," brother Winter said. "There are three ways that we can know He was still God, even in the flesh, and these are supported by Scripture:

"How was He acknowledged as God?" I asked.

"Do you remember that Jesus referred to Himself as the I AM who had spoken to Moses from the burning bush? (John 8:58) Sometimes people say Jesus, Himself, never actually claimed to be God, but this passage very plainly makes that statement. Then in John 10:30, He said, '**I and My Father are One.**' And the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to say to the elders of the church in Ephesus, '**... to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.**'"

"All of these statements are about Jesus, in the flesh, yet they say that He was still God!" brother Winters explained.

"But what about being *worshiped*?" I asked.

"That is a very important distinction," brother Winters answered. "God has strictly forbidden the worship of anything or anyone except *Himself*! The first of the Ten Commandments was,

For Discussion:

18. What were the elders at Ephesus told to do? _____

19. Could "the church of God" also be worded, "the church of Christ", since it was God — Christ — who purchased the church with His own blood? _____

20. Do you feel comfortable calling Jesus "God"? _____

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).

“But when Jesus stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee, ‘... **those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him**’” (Matthew 14:33).

“That’s right!” I said. “I remember how amazed they were, and they asked, ‘**Who is this, that even the winds and the seas obey Him?**’”

“There was one especially poignant instance when Jesus was worshiped,” brother Winters continued. “He had healed a blind man, and the rulers of the Temple were really upset about that. They had agreed that if anyone said that He was the expected Messiah, he would be put out of the synagogue.”

“What did that mean?” I asked.

“To be put out of the synagogue meant that that person was cut off from the social and religious center of the community. In effect, he would be cut off from God. When the parents of the blind man were asked who had healed him, they 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 (John 9:20,21).

“So they questioned the healed man and tried to force him to deny that the one who had healed him was from God. When he insisted that only one with God’s approval could have healed a man born blind, the rulers cast him out. Jesus knew that, because of the man’s faith in Himself, he had been cut off from worshipping God, so He went and found him. He asked the man, ‘**Do you believe in the Son of God?**’

“The man answered, ‘**Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?**’ Then Jesus told him plainly something that very few people knew at that point in time: ‘**You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.**’”

“What did the man do then?” I asked.

“He cried out, ‘**Lord, I believe!**’ **And he worshiped Him**’ (John 9:35-38). So, even though the rulers of the synagogue had tried to cut this man off from God, Jesus confided in him, explaining His own Deity, *and allowed him to worship Himself.*”

“I remember another time someone worshiped Him,” I said. “After His resurrection, when He appeared to the apostles, one of them called Him, ‘**My Lord and My God!**’ (John 20:28).”

“You’re right, Anthony. That was Thomas.”

“But what about forgiving sins? Don’t we forgive each other? So how can that prove that He was still God, even though He was in a human body?” I asked.

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

Does the Temple exist today? When was it destroyed?

Do Jews offer sacrifices today?

“Yes, we do forgive each other, when someone has hurt us or wronged us. But **sins** are moral violations of God’s laws, and they are committed *against God*, so only He can actually *forgive sins*. When Jesus said to the man who was paralyzed, ‘**Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you,**’ the Jewish leaders thought angrily within their hearts, ‘**This man blasphemes!**’ Clearly, they

understood that only God can forgive sins, and that Jesus was claiming to be God when He told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven.

“So, to prove that His words were not just an empty claim, Jesus answered their unspoken thoughts by saying,

... 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).

“So even though the Word had laid aside His rights and powers in the Godhead, and had been born into a human body, He was still God?” I asked.

“Yes, He was still God,” brother Winters answered. Even if you decided not to do any of the things you are capable of doing as a human, would that mean that you had become some kind of animal?”

“No, a human can’t be anything but a human,” I answered. “So, in the same way, God can’t stop being God. But then how was He like us, as our real Brother?”

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

For Discussion:

21. Can humans forgive sins? _____

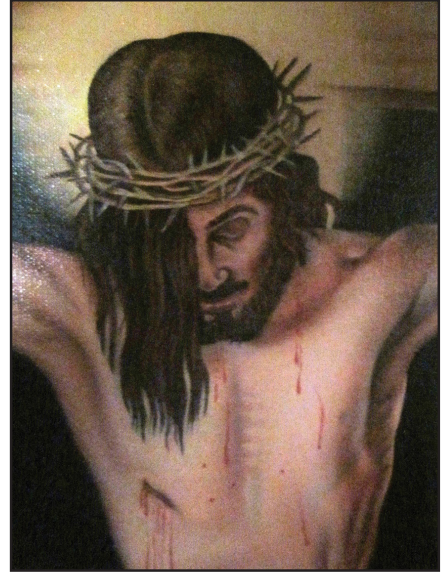
22. Did Jesus forgive sins? _____

23. 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



Brother Winters gave me a copy of a book called **Jesus Christ, the Eternal Sacrifice**. “Read this,” he said, “and you can talk to your Dad and Mom or me about any questions you may have.”

Since my friend, Mohammed, didn’t believe that God could have a Son, I was especially interested in the chapter entitled “The Brother of Man”. How could a Person of the Godhead actually become human? The more I thought about it, the more impossible it seemed — like me getting into the body and mind of an ant!

But the Bible said plainly that it happened. I remembered John 1:1:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God

But verse 14 said that “the Word” and “Jesus” were the same:

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

But why? Why couldn’t God have saved humans some other way — maybe by just saying, “I forgive you”. He is God — He can do *anything*. So why did the Word have to empty Himself of the rights and powers of Deity, to become human? The book on the sacrifice of Christ quoted Hebrews 10:5 and

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?

2:17, that a body was prepared for the Word, and that “. . . in all things He had to be made like His brethren.” That description — being *like* His brethren — must be a key to understanding what happened and why.

I decided to make an outline of the main points in the book, so that I could get the whole picture better in mind. That should provide clues and answers!

Likeness Number One:

1. He became the Son of God and the Son of man.

The change in the relationship in the Godhead had been prophesied hundreds of years before it happened!

- 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. Heirs of God.

Psalm 89:24-29: 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.

Hebrews 1:5,6: . . . to which of the angels did He ever say: “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 firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”

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.

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 super-natural power.

So *the Word* had not been the Son from eternity — God was telling the Psalmist it would happen at *some future time*. Of course I knew that both Matthew and Luke wrote of Jesus’ virgin birth. The angel had told Mary that she would have a son and that **“He will be called the Son of God”** (Luke 1:30-32).

And the goal of humans who believe in God is to become His **children** — not His *friends* or His *servants*.

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? _____

Likeness Number Two:

2. Christ was born of the Holy Spirit. What a clue in the parallel between humans and Jesus! Even though Jesus was *the Son of God*, it was through *the Holy Spirit* that He was born, according to Matthew 1:18-20. And when Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus how **humans** become *children of God*, He said,

Most assuredly, I say unto you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

So it was by **the Holy Spirit** that the **Word** was born as the Son of God and the Son of man — and it is by **the Holy Spirit** that **humans** are born spiritually in baptism as sons of God!

Likeness Number Three:

3. Jesus was God's first-born Son. In human families, there is a *first-born* and all of the other children follow. In God's family, Jesus is His first-born, and all humans who become God's children are brothers and sons after Him.

“But,” I thought, “what about the people who lived before Jesus? Wasn't Abraham God's son? Wasn't David?” My question was answered as I read more:

“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.

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).

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.

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) _____

“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 re-deemed

. . . 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!”

I liked the description in Galatians, of us being able to call God our Father because Jesus is our brother. I was amazed that I’d never before seen this parallel between God’s spiritual family and our human families: that there’s a “big brother” and then the rest of us; and that there’s the “first-born” and then all the children who have followed (Colossians 1:15).

Likeness Number Four:

4. Jesus, God’s Son, is described in Hebrews 1:3 as “. . . **Being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.**” Just as in a human family, there is family resemblance, Jesus looks like His Father: “**He is the image of the invisible God**” (Colossians 1:15), and “. . . **we all, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image**” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Likeness Number Five:

5. Jesus is the heir of God. Human families have heirs. Jesus is the One Whom God has appointed heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2). It struck me, what a change that was for Him! He wasn’t an heir from the beginning. I remembered that in Colossians 1:16 and 17 it said that everything was created *through Him, by Him and for Him*, as the Word. Now, as the *Son* and *Brother* of man, He is the *heir*! And in Romans 8:16,17 this promise is made:

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

When Dad came home from work, I showed him the book about Christ. “Look, Dad. This book talks about different ways Jesus was made like we

For Discussion:

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

are, here under the head ‘The Humanity of Jesus Christ’. I’ve been making an outline of this chapter, and there are five points in this next section.”

“Let’s see, Anthony,” Dad said, taking the book and beginning to read.

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.

self made a dramatic change — the very idea of the One who *created* all things putting Himself in such a position that He could *grow* and *increase* in wisdom is mind-boggling,” Dad said.

“And something else — Hebrews 5:8 says that **‘He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.’** I’m playing detective in this search and I see some real clues here,” I laughed.

“Point Number Two: To be *obedient* to His Father is like a human father-son relationship.”

“Yes, that’s saying He was under God’s authority.”

“And that He *learned* obedience is saying that it hadn’t been like that from the beginning,” I exclaimed. “This is really interesting.”

“Point Number Three,” Dad said: “He faced temptation! This is another way He was made *like His brethren*, because James 1:13 says, **‘God cannot be tempted by evil.’**”

“So, was Jesus *really tempted?*” I asked. “But if He was, how was He able to live without ever sinning?”

“Hebrews 2:18 says,

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

“Number One: ‘He Grew’ is the first way He showed His humanity.

“Luke 2:52 says,

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

“That verse definitely shows that emptying Him-

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.

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.

“Look, here is an explanation in this book about how He could resist every temptation:

“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 Christ-like nature. The nearer we come to absolute holiness, the less strength temptations will have over us.

“Christ functioned as a human, with the same emotions and thought processes which resulted in His 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.”

“These next two points are interesting,” Dad said as he continued to read. **“He foreknew events that were to happen’, and ‘He asked information’.”**

“Why would He have to ask anything? He was God, and He knew everything!” I said.

“It sounds like a contradiction, doesn't it?” Dad asked. “But I think these are two more points that show how He was made like humans when He was born into a human body. Look up these Scriptures:

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

John 2:24,25: 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.

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? _____

John 1:48: 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.”

Luke 6:8: But He knew their thoughts....

“So these verses say that Jesus knew these things, as super-natural knowledge.”

“But,” Dad said, “we need to remember two things about Jesus in the flesh: **One**, He had *emptied Himself* of the right to use His own power of knowing all things, as God. He was functioning as a human, just like us. So this super-natural knowledge was not His own.”

“Oh, I know the other point! The *Holy Spirit* came to Him at His baptism! So it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that He could know things humans can’t know. But, wait — how does that show that He was made like us? The Holy Spirit doesn’t help us to know things miraculously.”

“No. But His work changes with the needs. Jesus needed super-natural knowledge in those situations, to prove He was from God. Later, the Apostles, through the power of the Spirit, performed miracles and wrote the New Testament. It isn’t our work to *prove* that we are from God, or to speak some new revelation, so we don’t need the miraculous power of the Spirit. He does work in our lives, though, according to Romans 8:26 and 27, and Ephesians 3:16. So the parallel is that **He helped Jesus in the ways in which He needed help, and He helps us with the things we can’t do for ourselves.**

“So, when it wasn’t necessary for Jesus to know peoples’ thoughts, or some other information by the power of the Holy Spirit, He functioned just like we do — by asking questions and then acting on the information supplied by the answers,” Dad finished.

“Some verses are given in this book:

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

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

For Discussion:

13. List three things Jesus did in response to information He asked for and was given:

- A.
- B.
- C.

Mark 11:13: And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He [Jesus] went to see if perhaps He would find something on it

Luke 9:18: 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?”

John 11:3,4: . . . Therefore the sisters [of Lazarus] sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick.” When Jesus heard that

Mark 13:32: But of that day and hour [the end of the world] no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

“That’s really amazing,” I said, “that the Bible shows that the difference in His power of knowledge depended on the situation: He had miraculous knowledge only when He needed it to do the work He was born to do. I’d never thought about that!”

“But *if we don’t think about that*, it looks like such a *contradiction* — that sometimes He knew things, and sometimes He didn’t. Applying this rule, the differences make sense.”

“But did Jesus show *human* response, emotionally, to things that happened?” I asked. “Sometimes I imagine that God is above having emotions — too great to feel the little things we feel. Was Jesus like us in His emotions? Was He *really* human?”

“Well, let’s look at these Scriptures,” Dad answered.

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

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

John 11:33-35: [At the death of Lazarus] 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*.

Luke 19:41: Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it. “So He did feel human emotions!”

“And physically, He felt what we feel,” Dad went on. “He felt hunger and thirst, according to Matthew 4:2 and John 19:28. He felt tired too:

Jesus, therefore, being *wearied* from His journey . . . (John 4:6).

“Here’s another verse:

Matthew 26:38: My soul is *exceedingly sorrowful*, even unto death. Stay here and watch with Me.

Luke 22:44 [in the Garden, before His betrayal and arrest]: And being in *agony*, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

“The verse in Hebrews [5:7] where it says *He learned obedience* is a sad description of those prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane. Listen, Dad, and just imagine what He was feeling:

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....

“That makes me want to cry for Him, when I really think about what it’s saying.”

“You’re right, Son. We read over the words so many times and just don’t think of what He was going through.

“Another verse that ties in with this is Luke 22:43, where an angel came to strengthen Him. That tells us a lot. It further confirms what ‘emptying’ Himself meant. Can you imagine *an angel* being able to strengthen *God*? But Hebrews 1:14 says that angels are sent to do service to those who will be heirs of salvation — to humans. So this scene of Jesus in the garden, being strengthened by an angel, is a very poignant description of His humanness.”

“Let me read the summary in this chapter of the book, Dad:

“...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, 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.”

“When I started talking to Mohammed and Ram about Jesus, I never thought I’d learn so many things about Him myself! This is such a different understanding of Him — as our Brother — than I’ve had before.”

Dad said thoughtfully, as he closed the book and stood up to go to bed, “I’ve read all of these Scriptures before, Anthony, but I’d never realized either just how much Jesus gave up to save us.”

For Discussion:

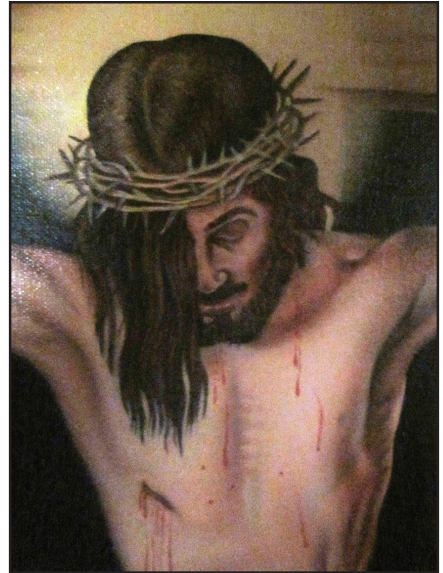
14. When did Jesus use the power of the Holy Spirit to know things?

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? _____

Sent by The Father

Chapter Five



The next morning at breakfast, Mom suggested a good plan for continuing our study.

“We’ve learned something about what it meant, that Jesus emptied Himself when He was born as a human. I think it would be good to study more along that line.”

“Yes,” Dad answered, “the way He sounded and the things He did in the Old Testament as ‘the Word’ — well, it sounds like God, Himself, talking. I mean, it sounds like the One of the Godhead who *became* the Father!”

“So let’s see how different the Word sounds in the New Testament,” Mom said.

I was looking ahead in our new book on the sacrifice of Christ. “There are ten points given here about Him *before* He was born as a human.”

“Let me see,” Dad said, reaching for the book:

(1) The Word was with God and the Word **was** God (John 1:1).

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:

- 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?**

- (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 (1 Corinthians 10:4).
- (5) He was **the Word testifying through the prophets** (1 Peter 1:11).



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



Jesus cleansing the Temple while He was on the earth.

(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 One who became “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, plural) more than 3,000 times.

“All of those points show clearly that, as the Word, He was equal in every way with God!” Dad exclaimed. “There’s no way to doubt that. But what a change when He emptied Himself and was born as the Son of God and as the Son of man!”

“So, why don’t we begin tonight to read one of the Gospel accounts, to see how different the Word sounds as Jesus?” Mom suggested.

“That’s a good idea!” I was excited. We were on another detective case — a spiritual one!

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). _____

That night we sat around the dining table, Bibles and high-lighters in hand, and we began to read. I was just amazed at how fast the chapters flew by when we were *looking* for particular things. We read half the book of John that night, and the other part the next night.

We had already noticed the first verse of John 1, where it says that the Word — Who was born as Jesus Christ — existed in the beginning *with* God, and that He *was* God. This fit with the many other scripture references we studied about Him before His birth. “Verse 4 says, ‘**In Him was life,**’” I said, as we began reading. “What does that mean?”

“It would seem to be another way of saying that He was equal in the God-head,” Dad answered, “since the power of life — life within Himself, and not drawn from some other source — is God’s, and no one else’s.”

“But I remember.... Let’s see,” Mom spoke up, turning pages. “Yes, here in John 5:26, it says, ‘**As the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.**’ So, if He already had life in Himself, why does this verse say God gave Him that power?”

“Again,” Dad answered, laughing, “we have to remember we’ve crossed over that ‘emptying’ line! In verse 1, He was God, with equal powers. In 5:26 He had laid aside His own powers and was functioning as a human. But in the role of Savior, it was necessary for Him to have certain powers to do that work. God, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in Jesus, gave back *whatever* super-natural powers He needed, *when* He needed them. So He, again, had *life* within Himself — but what is the difference now?”

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.

“I see!” I exclaimed. “*Before*, the power was His, as One of the Godhead. *Now*, as Jesus Christ, the power is His because God gave it to Him!”

“Yes, and that shows the parallel again between Jesus and humans — He had become dependent on God for what He needed, just as we are dependent,” Dad explained.

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 in 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?

“So let’s just go through the book of John,” Mom said, “and mark the words that show Jesus’ dependence on God.”

John 3:35: The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

“This verse says a lot,” Dad mused. “In the beginning it was *through the Word* that all things were created, according to Colossians 1:16, so everything was His, as One of the Godhead. But now, in the changed role of Son to Father, the Father *has given all things into His hand*. Though He, again, has all things, *now* it is because *they have been given to Him*.”

John 5:19,20: The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatsoever He does, the Son does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does.

“So, as the Son, He works under the authority of God — and what He would have known fully as the Word, now the Father shows Him!”

John 5:22: For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.

“And He doesn’t judge because of *His* authority as *the Word*, but because God *has given* Him that authority! What a *difference!*”

“Look what this verse says,” Mom said as she read 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.

“Look at what He was really saying in those words:

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.**

“Those are sweeping statements of subjection to God,” Dad said. “So that ‘emptying’ line made a total difference between the Word in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New! That’s why He sounded like God whenever He spoke or did something in the Old Testament, because He *had* all the power and authority of One of the Godhead. But when He emptied Himself and was born as a human, becoming the ‘first-born’ Son of God, there’s a different sound. He’s talking of God *sending Him*, of doing *God’s will*, of all of His power and authority being given by God. What a change!”

We kept reading and marking:

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.

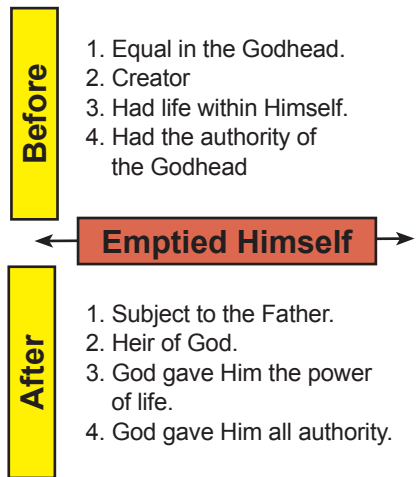
John 8:26: ... He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.

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.



For Discussion:

9. Whose works did Jesus do? _____. Verse? _____
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?

I was amazed at how much of the book of John was high-lighted when we got through. Why hadn't I ever noticed before just what Jesus was saying — that everything He said and did was through God's gift or direction?

I'd never realized what changes He had gone through, and how much He had given up, to be our Brother — our Savior. In verse after verse, the parallel between Jesus' obedience to God as His only begotten Son, and our obedience

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? _____

as His children through baptism, was emphasized by Jesus' words of being sent by the Father and of being obedient to Him.

What an example He set for us, in His unquestioning obedience to His Father! I couldn't help but ask myself, "The next time Dad tells you to do something, and you feel that ugly answer growing in your head, of 'No, I don't want to do that...' are you going to be obedient like Jesus was?"

Now that my eyes were being opened, I wondered what else there was to learn....

Isaiah 48:12,16: One of the Godhead 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....*"

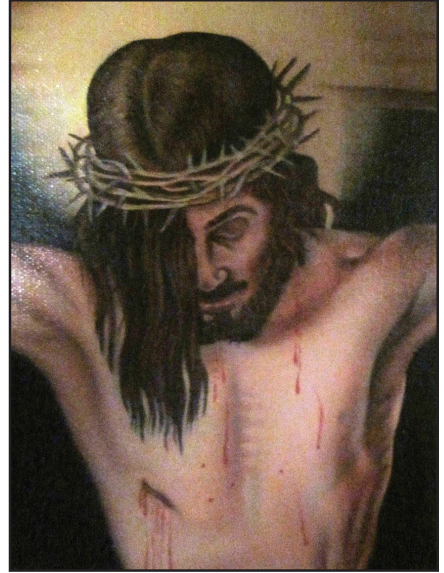
How do these statements correspond with those in the book of John?

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 as 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.

The Commitment

Chapter Six



I'd been talking all along with Mohammed and Ram about the things I'd been learning. I had shown them the Scriptures about the Word being with God in the beginning, and, as God, being the One *through* whom and *for* whom everything was created. We had talked about Him being born as God's Son so that He could be made in every way like the humans He had come to save.

"That's not so different from Hindu teachings," Ram had said. "We believe that the gods can take human bodies, to teach us a better way — like our God, Krishna, did."

Mohammed still couldn't see how God could have a Son, but he was interested in learning more about it. We decided to have a sleep-over at my house so we would have more time to talk.

I had been reading about Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, just before His arrest. "Hey, guys, tell me what you think about this: Jesus said

There are many people who do believe that God has shown Himself in all religions, and that "all religions lead to the same destination". One problem with this thinking is that there are such contradictory doctrines or "faiths" or "truths" in these various religions. **Real truth cannot contradict itself.**

From The Civilizations of India by Romech C. Dutt:

"Rama the hero of the Ramayana, Krishna one of the heroes of the Mahabharata, and even Buddha himself who had received popular worship for a thousand years, were all considered incarnations of Vishnu, the god of preservation."

For Discussion:

1. Is there *some* truth in all religions? Give an example.
2. Different religions teach different doctrines. Can all of them be right?
3. Real _____ cannot _____ itself.

to His disciples, **'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death,'** and He went a little further into the garden and fell on His face and prayed. We read the other night, here in Hebrews 5:7 that Jesus **'offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears'.**"

"You know, that doesn't sound like *God* to me," Mohammed said. "What was He begging for?"

"Well, He said, **'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me'.**"

"So He didn't want to die?" asked Ram.

"Was He afraid to die?" Mohammed asked.

"I don't know," I had to admit. "*Begging* was really out of character for Jesus. I am trying to remember, but I can't think of any other time when He seemed really disturbed about something that was happening. Oh, yes, I know! He cried when His friend, Lazarus, died (John 11:33,35), and He was angry at the people who were desecrating the temple (John 2:14-17) with their selling and cheating about sacrifices. But He *always* was in control of the situations."

"Like when?" asked Ram.

"Well, one time Mary and Joseph accidentally left Jesus behind in Jerusalem when He was only twelve. When they found Him, He was discussing the Scriptures with the teachers in the Temple — not crying because He was lost.

"And many times people tried to trip Him up, asking trick questions, but He always knew how to answer. He was always the one in control. Here in the Garden, though, He seems really disturbed over what's about to happen."

"What *is* about to happen?" asked Ram.

"He'd just told the disciples at the Passover Supper that He would be betrayed and killed," I answered.

"So ... He was human. Maybe He really *was* afraid of dying. Maybe He had seen crucifixions and didn't want to have to feel that kind of pain," Mohammed suggested.

"Maybe," I conceded, "but history says that in the early years of Christianity many of His followers died horrible deaths — but they were singing hymns or praying. I can't believe they would show more courage than their leader."

"What was He doing while He was praying?" Ram asked.

"Luke 22:43 says, 'And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground'," I read.

"That was *very* bad," agreed Ram. "Can a person really 'sweat blood'?"

“**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**).

“Our preacher, brother Winters, says that there are medical accounts of sweating blood, and that people usually died from it. So when Jesus said, ‘**My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death,**’ He wasn’t exaggerating.”

“But *why* was He so troubled, if it wasn’t just a normal human fear of dying?” Ram asked again.

“It’s a mystery to me,” I admitted. “Let’s find my Dad and see what he thinks.”

So we traced him down, in the kitchen, helping Mom with the supper dishes — of all things! I told them what we had been talking about. “So, Dad — and Mom — was Jesus’ agony in the Garden because He was afraid of dying — or what?”

“Well, son, I agree with what you all have decided, that it must not have been dread of pain or physical death. I’m sure He must have been even more courageous than His followers who were martyrs for Him. No, I believe there was another reason.”

“Then what was He so troubled about?” asked Mohammed. “Tears and fear, and letting His enemies kill Him don’t fit my idea of courage or of power. Muslims believe in strength, not weakness. Our prophet rose up from nothing and became the greatest power in the world during his life. But he did it through mighty armies and the courage to fight and kill the infidels. That was how he spread Islam over the Middle East — not through meekly allowing himself to be killed.”

“Being willing to die does seem to be a strange philosophy for winning, doesn’t it?” agreed Dad. “But Jesus wasn’t just starting another religion,

For Discussion:

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

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

and His mission wasn't to conquer the world by force. There's a verse (Matthew 18:11) that says Jesus came to save the lost. What we've not talked about is the fact that *Jesus was born to be the Savior*. Do you know what that means?" Dad asked.

"A savior rescues someone who can't get himself out of his trouble," suggested Ram.

"That's right," Dad agreed. "The problem was that every human was in trouble. Everyone is a sinner, and sin is a wall separating us from God. God wanted us back but we couldn't take away that wall of sin ourselves."

"So Jesus — One of the Godhead — lowered Himself to become a human, to take the wall of sin away?" I asked.

"That's right," Dad said. "The Scriptures say that He was pure righteousness — that there was no sin in Him — that He never was a sinner, but He took the debt of our sins as His own so that we would be purified before God."

"Then it was the dread of taking our sins that caused His agony?" Mohammed asked.

"I believe that was it, Mohammed. Sin and its consequences are not as scary to us as they ought to be. We see sin all the time, and we've done wrong things ourselves. So our consciences are somewhat hardened. And we don't know the horrors yet of what eternal punishment for sin will be like. So our feelings about sin are not the same as Jesus would have felt that night."

Muslim Intolerance

"For the conquered, however, the arrival of Muhammad's followers was an excellent approximation of hell on earth. The men were frequently slaughtered outright, their chiefs sometimes singled out for the grotesque agonies of crucifixion. Adult male survivors became slaves. Screaming women and children, dragged from homes and hiding places, were assessed, inventoried, and like everything else, parceled out among the victors. The majority probably ended up in slave markets, but first the prettier women and girls were often forced by the Islamic warriors who had just slaughtered their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons.

Muslims for many generations interpreted the Qur'an as specifically sanctioning the rape of women captured in battle. Equally relevant, the holy book limits Muslims to four wives, but puts no numerical restriction on female slaves." (from **The Sword of Islam**, pg. 164, **Christian History Project**.)

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:

4. Was it Jesus' goal to force the world to believe in Him as God's Son? _____
5. Was it Mohammed's goal to force the world to accept Islam as the religion from God? _____
6. Do you think "little white sins" are wrong? _____ What would you count as a "small" sin? _____ Is lying a small sin? _____ (Revelation 21:8).

The struggle in the Garden

suggests 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 Himself to rescue us from spiritual death.

“Is sin really that bad?” asked Ram.

“We’re all used to the idea of ‘little white lies,’” Dad laughed, “and we see what we call ‘little’ sins all the time. But recently some terrorists took over a school in Russia, with hundreds of small children inside. They committed the most brutal, inhumane acts, holding those innocent children for three days in the worst kind of horrifying fear, shooting a fellow-terrorist in front of them, dragging bleeding corpses through the crowd, detonating suicide belts on two of the female terrorists, and shooting the children in the back as they tried to run away in the bedlam that followed the explosions. Could you have done that kind of sin?”

“No!” shuddered Ram. “I don’t know how anybody could be so cruel.”

“But how would you feel, being innocent of such horrible crimes, if you had to take them as your own, to pay the debt for them, just as though it was your heart that had done them?”

“To really take the burden of such sin — that would be awful,” I said, thinking of how Jesus must have felt.

“So being the Savior meant that He had to take the responsibility for paying the penalty for all the sins, as though they were His own?” asked Mohammed.

“Yes,” Dad answered. “And, remember — sin does have penalties. Separation from God, and physical and spiritual death — those are the penalties. Jesus had never known sin. There had never been a barrier between Himself and God.”

“In our religion, we recognize many men as holy men,” Ram said thoughtfully, “but no one is called a Savior.”

“We have prophets and they tell us how we can save ourselves,” Mohammed said. “There’s no savior in Islam either — but maybe we can save ourselves.”

For Discussion:

7. What are the penalties of sin?

A. _____

B. _____

Maybe it wasn't necessary for Jesus to take anyone's sins, or to die."

"The Bible says, '**...the wages of sin is death...**' (Romans 6:23). Without a Savior, there is no escape for us. We must all **die spiritually and be separated from God,**" Dad said. "I think that the struggle Jesus faced in Gethsemane was with Himself over the great eternal cost that He would be committing to make — whatever that would be — so that humans could be restored to God."

"What would have happened if He had decided not to die for us?" I asked.

"Then we would have no hope," Dad answered.

The Qur'an on the subject of salvation:

"Every soul has a goal to work towards. Make your goal doing good and race with others for this purpose" (Qur'an 2:148).

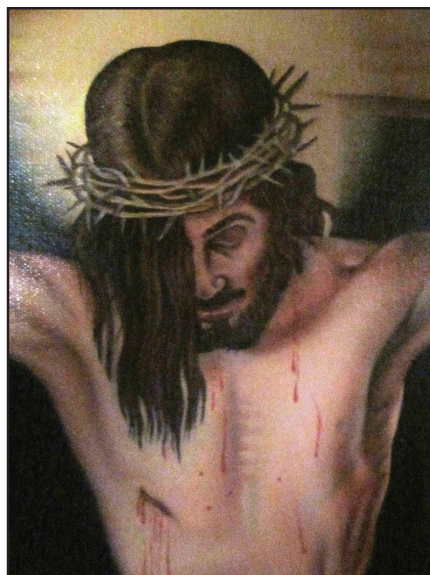
"**Salvation in Islam** comes from making the choice while alive to accept Allah and mold your life according to the way of life he has established" (The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Islam by Yahya Emerick, P. 34).

For Discussion:

1. Which is the only religion that has a Savior? _____
2. Is there a savior in Islam? _____ In Hinduism? _____ In Buddhism? _____
3. How can a person be saved, according to these religions? _____
4. What was the cause of Jesus' anguish in the Garden?
5. What are the two penalties of sin? _____

The Death

Chapter Seven



After school the next day, I persuaded Ram and Mohammed to go with me to brother Winter's office. "We've been reading and trying to understand about Jesus' prayers and crying in the Garden of Gethsemane," I told him, "and we thought we'd check with you to see if we're right in what we're thinking."

"And what is that?"

"Well, we were puzzled about why Jesus always seemed in control of every other situation, but then in the Garden there seemed to be such a struggle in Himself about what was going to happen."

"That's a good question, Anthony. I'm proud of you boys for having such an interest in this study. I can see you're learning a lot."

"Yes sir," Ram answered, "but we still have some questions!"

"That's all right," brother Winters said. "As long as we really want to understand God's word, having questions and looking for answers are good things."

"First we thought that maybe the reason Jesus was so upset in the Garden was because He was human and He didn't want to die," I explained.

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.

“Then what did you think?”

“That it must have been more than that, because even His followers were brave when they were being arrested and killed for Him. Dad said that the struggle was not the pain and death, but because He was about to take the penalty for our sins. But even if that was what He was dreading, I am not sure I understand why.”

“Maybe a little illustration will help to clear up the puzzle,” suggested brother Winter. “Suppose you lived in a country where there was slavery, and you saw a slave in really bad condition. You felt so sorry for him that you decided to buy him and set him free. You paid the money and took your slave. Is that a true picture of what might happen?”

“Yes, I guess so,” I answered, looking to Ram and Mohammed for agreement. “But I still don’t understand.”

“Well, would it cost you something to buy your slave?”

“Sure! Some money.”

“And once you paid the money, you wouldn’t get it back, would you? Jesus was about to pay for us — slaves of sin, in bad shape — but He wouldn’t pay with money. He would pay with His physical life, and the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 5:20, 21: **‘For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.’** That is, our sins would be counted against His record.

“We know that the Godhead had made the plan for the salvation of humans even before the world began, because Revelation 13:8 says that **the Lord was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world,**” brother Winters explained. “In this prayer — in this time of struggle — Christ was begging, **‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me’** (Matthew 26:38).”

“So you’re saying He ‘paid out’ something that really changed things for Him,” I said, beginning to see more of what was involved.

“But what was that?” Ram asked.

“We’ll find out more as we continue in our study,” brother Winters promised. “Mohammed, have you and Ram ever read the account of Jesus’ arrest, trial, and crucifixion?”

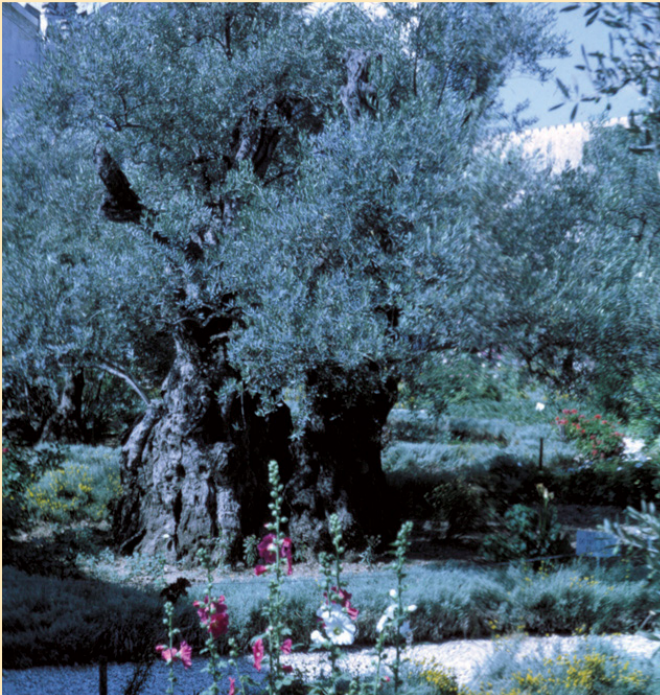
For Discussion:

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

“No,” Ram said. “I hadn’t read anything in the Bible until we’ve been reading with Anthony about these questions. Is it hard to understand?”

“I think not,” assured brother Winters. “I’ll take some verses from each of the Gospel stories and read them to you. O.K.?”

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, “Whom are you seeking?”

They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And then — when He said

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? _____**

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).

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 the one who struck You?” And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him (Luke 22:63-65).

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.**

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 to build it in three days.’”

And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?” But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put

You under oath by the living God: 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?”

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 25:59-68).

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).

“Did you know, Anthony, that these things that were happening to Jesus had actually been foretold about seven hundred years earlier by the prophet Isaiah? And it was **the Word — the One of the Godhead** who was born into the world as **Jesus** — *who had given the message to Isaiah!* Listen to what He said about ‘...**the Lord...your Savior, 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).

“Prophecies like this one, Mohammed and Ram, help us to know that Jesus was really who He claimed to be. Listen to another statement Isaiah made, foretelling the birth of Jesus:

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us’ (Isaiah 7:14).

“Many, many other very specific statements were made about His life and death hundreds of years before He was born — statements about things that only God could have known at that time. When we study and see that all of those things came true in Jesus’ life, we become convinced that He really was the promised Savior.”

“I didn’t know about all of those things that had been told before He was born,” Ram admitted, “but those leaders who had Him arrested knew the Bible. Why didn’t they recognize Jesus?”

“Maybe because they were looking for an earthly king like King David. Jesus didn’t have a halo on His head, or a crown — maybe He seemed so ordinary, and even poor, that they just couldn’t believe Him,” suggested brother Winters. “That would seem to be the problem in the trial. In the passages we read, many false charges were made against Jesus. What did He do to defend Himself?”

“Nothing,” I answered. “He didn’t even say anything.”

“But finally He did,” brother Winters said, smiling. “The High Priest demanded, ‘**Under oath, tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.**’ And that brought an answer. The record had to be clearly established for all men of all time: **Jesus was being crucified because He was the Christ, the Messiah!**”

For Discussion:

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

10. Why would the Jewish leaders be so determined to condemn Jesus? _____

“But if those men were teachers of the Bible, when He said He was the Son of God, why weren’t they afraid to condemn Him,” Ram asked.

“That is strange,” agreed brother Winters. “You would think they would have said, ‘We’d better back up and really consider this man’s claims and the miracles everyone says He’s done.’ But their minds were so set, they were so convinced that He was a fake and an imposter — maybe they were so determined not to give up the grand idea of the king they had had in mind — that His statement, ‘**I am [the Christ]**’ was the last ‘blasphemous’ word they could stand to hear.”

“So they condemned Him,” Mohammed said quietly.

“Yes, they did,” agreed brother Winters. “Would you boys like to continue with our reading?”

“I would,” I said, and Ram and Mohammed nodded.

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

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. _____

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.

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

Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning 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).

"After Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, had declared Jesus innocent of the false charges brought against Him by the leaders of the Jews, He was taken to Herod, the king over Galilee, Jesus' home 'state'."

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 23:8-11).

Choice of the Mob

Brother Winters continued with the story: “At that time there was a custom for the Roman governor to release one prisoner during the Jewish Pass-over celebrations, as a gesture of good will. Hoping that the people would choose Jesus, Pilate asked,

“Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas [a notorious criminal], or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy

... But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus

.... 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!”

Then 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).

“When Pilate couldn’t find a way to release Jesus without offending the Jewish leaders, he gave the command that He be taken away and scourged.”

Mockery by the Soldiers

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



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? _____

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

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 [Judas, and the Jewish leaders] 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."

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!"

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? _____

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).

“All of these terrible things had been described by Isaiah almost seven hundred years before they happened:

“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 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 transgressions of My people He was stricken” (Isaiah 53:3-8).

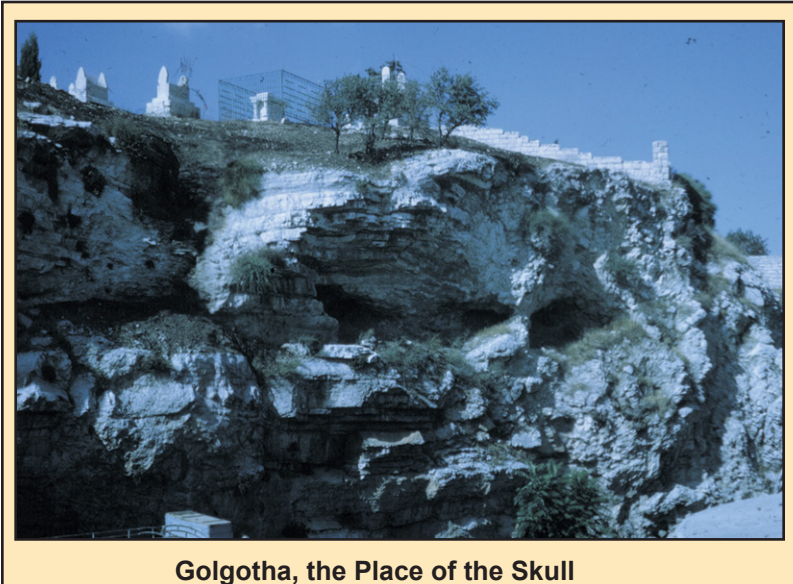
“Can you imagine that terrible scene?” brother Winters asked. “By this time Jesus must have been barely conscious. After being questioned during the night by the Sanhedrin court, and being beaten by the temple guard, He had been taken to Pilate for a trial, then to Herod, and back again to Pilate. Each group of soldiers had done their part in torturing Him. Isaiah had described Him, **“...His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men...” (Isaiah 52:14).**

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

“But that was just the beginning of His suffering, boys. We’ll continue to read, but I want you to keep in mind what Jesus had said in the Garden when Peter was trying to prevent the guards from arresting Him, **“...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).**

“In everything that was happening, Jesus could have called for the Power of Heaven to bring it to a stop, and God would have done that. Jesus didn’t

have to die for us, but before the creation of the world, and back there in the Garden He had made the commitment, and now He was going through with it.”



Golgotha, the Place of the Skull

To Golgotha

Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. 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; Prophecy: Psalm 22:18).

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.

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.

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.”

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? _____

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).

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).

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 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, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered 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).

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? _____
-

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!"

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last (John 19:30; Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:5).

Then, 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.

So 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).

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.

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? _____

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).

When brother Winters finished the reading, we just sat there, not saying anything. I had been listening like I was hearing the story for the first time, because I knew that Ram and Mohammed had not heard it fully before.

Brother Winters broke the silence. “People sometimes speak of the cross as though it is something to be worshiped, almost something glorious. But there was nothing glorious in the terrible procession that made its way that day from Pilate’s judgment hall to the place of the crucifixion.

“Physically, Jesus had endured many hours of trial, beating, and a Roman scourging. The scourge was made of steel-tipped leather strips bound together so that every lash made multiplied deep cuts and welts. In the hands of a trained soldier, it was a murderous weapon.

“Without food and water and treatment for His many wounds — wounds that would, by then, have been throbbing, drying, attracting flies and other insects — Jesus was led out of the judgment hall, bearing His cross. But even the hardened soldiers could see that He had no strength left, so they stopped a man from Cyrene and forced him to help with that horrible burden.

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*, pg33)

“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.)

I think it’s interesting that Simon’s two sons, Alexander and Rufus, later became Christians and are mentioned in Mark 15:21.

“Films have been made depicting Jesus’ crucifixion, but they don’t show the horror of having the body’s weight hanging from the arms, and the muscle cramps that would result in the arms and chest, constricting the lungs and beginning the process of suffocation. Not even considering the pain of the nails in His hands and feet, if you boys want to feel a little of what He endured, pull yourself up on the gym bars and hang there until the cramps become unbearable. Your chest muscles would become paralyzed and you would have to change positions in order to breathe. The excruciating pain when the crucified would push against the nails in his feet, in order to relieve the cramps in his chest and arms, would be unbearable. And that exchange of one terrible pain for another continued for every breath as long as the person lived. Did you notice, in the reading, that the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves? They would have died almost immediately of suffocation.”

“Why didn’t Jesus just come down from the cross?” Ram asked.

“You know, Ram, that was what the priests and the mob thought, too. In fact, they taunted Him by saying, **‘If you really are the Son of God, come down from the cross!’** And some of them wondered why

He didn't save Himself, when He had been able to do all the miracles for others — even raising the dead.”

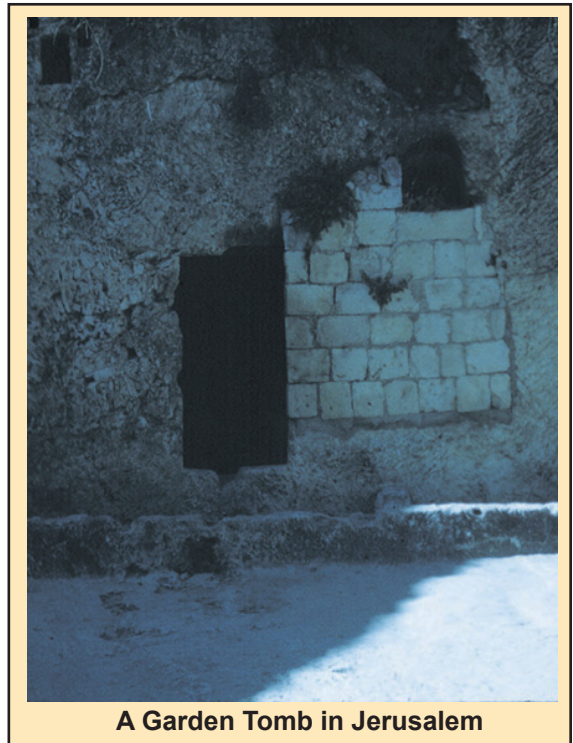
“He could've, couldn't He?” I asked.

“Yes, we know from the Biblical record that He could have called down the host of Heaven to save Himself and to obliterate every person who was standing there mocking and taunting Him. But then there would have been no sacrifice for sins — no way for God and humans to be reconciled. All of us would be forever separated from God and condemned. He didn't want that. And Jesus had made that final commitment in the Garden, you remember. During the trial and even in the torment of the cross, there's not one word of wavering, is there?”

“No. He even asked God to forgive them for what they were doing.”

“In Islam, we would say that forgiving His tormenters instead of destroying them was weakness,” Mohammed said, thoughtfully, “but maybe that was the greatest strength of all...”

“Yes, Mohammed, I think that you are beginning to understand what Jesus came to teach the world — that love and mercy and forgiveness are stronger than hatred and vengeance. All of us need God's forgiveness, and as Christians we must learn to extend that love and forgiveness to others — even those who wrong us and are not worthy of our good will.”



A Garden Tomb in Jerusalem

“Jesus forgave the thief,” I said. “He promised that he would be in Paradise that day.”

“You're right, Anthony. But let's think about that part of the story. Sometimes people say that the thief on the cross was saved by faith alone, and

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”.

they conclude that everyone can be saved in the same way — by faith alone. But there seems to be much more to the thief’s story than many realize. First of all, what did he call Jesus?”

Brother Winters handed his Bible to Ram, pointing to the passage. “Lord”, Ram answered.

“Now let’s think a little. Where was the thief?”

“He was dying on a cross,” Mohammed said.

“And what about Jesus?”

“He was dying on a cross, too,” I answered.

“Where were the disciples who had lived with Jesus for three years, who had heard Him preach and had seen all of His miracles?”

“All of them had run away except John,” I said, wondering what point brother Winters was about to make.

“These ‘faith only’ claims are made as though this was the thief’s first encounter with Jesus, his first knowledge of Him. But isn’t it strange that even in such a horrible situation, the thief called Jesus ‘Lord’? And, knowing that both he and Jesus were dying, isn’t it even stranger that he would ask Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom? And how did the thief know anything about a kingdom, anyway?”

“I hadn’t thought about those things!” I exclaimed. “So he must have known a lot about Jesus’ teachings!”

“Yes,” agreed brother Winters, “I can’t imagine how he wound up dying for crimes, but at that point in time he had more faith and better understanding of Jesus’ mission than Peter or James or any of the other apostles! Somehow he believed that Jesus would still become a King in His kingdom, even though He was dying!”

“But what I don’t understand,” I said, “was that Jesus asked God why He had forsaken Him. What did that mean?”

“Those were Jesus’ words just shortly before He died,” brother Winters explained. “Scholars have puzzled over them, and none of us may understand exactly what He meant. I am thinking, though, that a parallel between Jesus’ relationship in the Godhead, and ours, may help us to understand. Do you remember that we talked about Jesus’ dread of the cross because it would be there — in death — that He would take the burden of *our* sins *as though they were His own*?”

“Yes — but that was the plan — so why would He feel that God had forsaken Him?”

“Let’s look again at one of those parallels between Jesus and us. When we are born into God’s family through baptism, according to Acts 2:38, what happens?”

Mohammed read, “**...Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**”

“Here is a further explanation: ‘**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? (1 Corinthians 6:19).**’ So the Holy Spirit dwells in each Christian — and you remember that at the time of Jesus’ baptism, what happened?”

“The Holy Spirit came to Him, and it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that He did His miracles,” I answered. “But I don’t understand how this explains....”

“Let’s read further. Ephesians 4:30 warns that by **our behavior** we can **grieve** the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says that we can **quench** the Spirit. Hebrews 10:25-29; 6:4-8 and 2 Corinthians 13:5 show that we can so sin that the Spirit will **leave** us. Now, knowing that sin can cause the Spirit of God to leave us, what do you think might have been the reason for Jesus’ cry, ‘**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**’”

“Does it mean that because Jesus had taken the penalty of all of our sins as His own, the Holy Spirit left Him?” I asked, bewildered.

“I believe *that may have been what was happening*, Anthony. This was a separation that Jesus had never experienced before. In His death He was “**made sin for us**”, that is, “**He bore our sins in His body on the tree...**” (1 Peter 2:24) that we might “**become the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Corinthians 5:21). His cry may have been indicating that the Holy Spirit was driven from the Son of Man by the out-pouring of our sin upon Him. From the desolation of His soul, Jesus cried, ‘**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**’ The Word died alone, *not because He was a sinner*, but because as the Son of Man He was dying for *our* sins.

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).

“But,” brother Winters continued, “even this had been prophesied hundreds of years earlier by King David. In his Psalm 22, a detailed description was made of Jesus’ crucifixion and death, including that cry from His soul.”

“What happened then?” asked Ram.

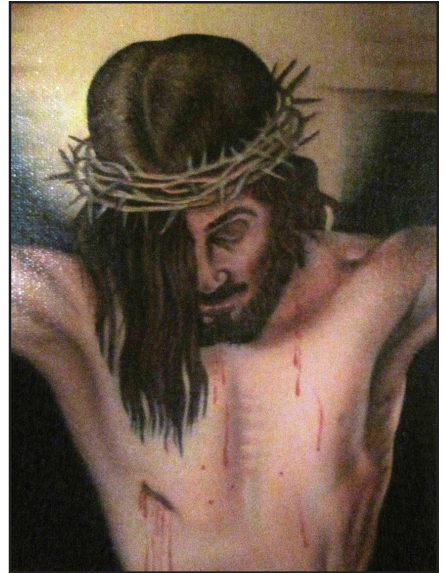
“He had finished His work. He said, **‘Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.’** Then He bowed His head and willed His spirit to leave His body. As He had said, **‘No one takes it [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My father’(John 10:18).’**”

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).

Was Physical Death the Only Cost?

Chapter Eight



My parents had planned a Friday night and Saturday camp-out at Estes Park. Since Ram and Mohammed were new to the country, Dad and Mom said I could ask them to go along, if their parents agreed. We had a great time, hiking, watching some herds of deer and elk, and we even saw a black bear lumbering off into the woods. Friday night we had a bonfire and told stories after supper.

Back at home Saturday evening, we were having a family devotional before bedtime. Ram said, “I’ve been thinking about the talk we had with Mr. Winters. He said that Jesus died for our sins, instead of us having to die. I don’t understand that. In Hinduism, we believe that we build up good deeds and if they outweigh the bad deeds, we are re-born into a better life. But we can’t get good deeds from anybody else.”

“In the Bible we read, **‘Your sins have separated you from God ...’**” Dad began to explain. “When Adam’s disobedience brought sin into the world, the wall of sin separated humans from God. God loved His creation and wanted the wall removed. But one part of God’s nature is *justness*. He has to do what is *right* because rightness is inherently Himself.”

“So it was an unsolvable puzzle, wasn’t it?” I asked. “We couldn’t tear down the wall of sin. And God wanted it gone, but He couldn’t just pretend we hadn’t sinned.”

For Discussion:

1. In “rightly dividing” the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ, where would the dividing line be, between His existence as the Word and as the Son of God?
2. How would you describe the result of “emptying Himself”?

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. Kanitkar 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?

"So what was the answer?" asked Mohammed.

"We've already talked some about that — that the Word, One of the Godhead, was born into the world as Jesus Christ, as one of us," Dad explained.

"But I don't understand how it could have really happened, that Jesus took our sins. If He did that, wouldn't the sins have separated Him from God, like they had separated us?" Ram asked.

"That's a HUGE question," Dad answered, laughing. "We will have to do a lot of thinking and studying to understand the answer to that one! So let's think first about the sin and the sacrifice, and let's look at some Scriptures:

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."

"These verses say that our sins were laid on Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. Now I want to ask you boys: Was Jesus' physical death all that our salvation cost?"

"Crucifixion was a horrible way to die," Mohammed admitted.

"We love *our* bodies," Dad continued, "because they are all we've ever known. But we understand from our earlier talks that it was a huge sacrifice for One of the Godhead to be living in a

For Discussion:

3. How do the Scriptures say that sin separates us from God?

4. What is the "payment" for sin? _____

5. Who was "made sin" for us? _____

human body — worse, in many ways, than imprisonment would be for you and me.”

“Yes, that was part of ‘emptying Himself,’” I agreed, “so that would have been a sacrifice He would have been making for the 33 years He lived on the earth.”

“But *freedom from that body*, even in its death, would have been a victory for Him, rather than a sacrifice! Remember, the Word had existed as One of the Godhead from eternity, and He will continue eternally.

Ram asked, “Did He sacrifice more than His human body?”

“Let’s answer that with another question,” suggested Dad. “Was the sin that separated humans from God *physical or spiritual* sin?”

“Well,” I answered, thinking hard, “it would have been both, because it was disobedience to God and it was *wrongs done in our physical minds and bodies*.”

“So all humans are under the sentence of physical death,” Dad explained. “Every human body will die because of sin. But is that all?”

“No — we are a soul that is ‘spirit’ and it doesn’t really die.”

“So not only were our bodies under the sentence of death; our souls were also separated from God by our sins. That separation is called spiritual death and all humans who grow to maturity experience that spiritual death when

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).

For Discussion:

6. Make a list of different sins, and discuss why God would have forbidden these things. _____

7. In our changing culture, some things that God condemns are now approved by our human laws (for instance, homosexual behavior, divorce for any reason, abortion). Using your concordance, find Scriptures showing God’s condemnation of these things. _____

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)

they begin to sin. That was the mess we were in: *all humans* would die **physically** and *all sinners* would also die **spiritually** in hell, separated from God. And we couldn't do anything to prevent it from happening."

"So Jesus died...." Ram began. "His *human body* died. But He didn't go to hell, did He?"

"Well, let's see what the Scriptures say," Dad answered. "The verses we were reading awhile ago said that

... the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all

and

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

"Now, those verses say that our sins were laid on Christ. Did He actually become *a sinner*?"

"I don't know." Mohammed answered.

"No, the Scriptures never say He was a sinner. He was pure and totally righteous. But neither was He just a symbolic sacrifice, like you sometimes offer even today, Ram, in Hinduism, or you, Mohammed, in Islam.

"The statement in 2 Corinthians 5:21 says two things:

(1) He was **made sin**.

(2) We were **made righteousness** in Him.

"So our sins covered Him over, in just the same way that **His blood, His righteousness**, covers us over. Now, when God looks at humans who have become His children through Christ, He sees the red covering of Jesus' blood.

For Discussion:

8. Did Jesus become a sinner? _____

9. Discuss what the Old Testament and the New Testament say about hell. Look up additional references in your concordance. _____

Because He has taken away every one of our sins, we are perfect before God. That's what Jesus did."

"But I don't understand," Ram objected. "If He paid for humans with His righteousness, didn't He have to go to hell in our place?"

"Let's think some more," Dad said. "We've talked about the payment or wage for sin being death. Jesus accepted physical death. By accepting that penalty, He had accepted our sins as His, and He could no longer turn back. Do you remember His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane? We decided it wasn't fear of physical death that caused Him so much grief, because Jesus bravely faced the death on the cross.

"This — **the acceptance of our sins as His debt to pay**— was what He was dreading, because He knew that when He had actually taken that responsibility, He could never again go back to the way things had been with God from eternity. Now, we have to find out just what changes He was accepting in that decision.

"So **obedient humans** were justified — *cleansed* — by *His blood*. But consider this illustration: You owe a million dollars, and you have not a cent with which to pay your debt. Your brother steps up and says, 'I'll take the responsibility for your debt.' *That clears you* — it's no longer counted against **your** record. But now your brother has to pay the debt that has become his, **out of his assets**. He has a billion dollars in his bank account, so he pays the million he had promised, and now *he* is **personally** clear of the debt, too — but what he paid out of his possessions is gone; *he cannot take it back and again have a billion dollars*.

"There is a Scripture which says,

God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit ... (1 Timothy 3:16).

"God showing Himself '**in the flesh**' would have reference to the Word being born as Jesus Christ. But the words '**justified in the Spirit**' are more difficult to understand. 'Justified' means to be exonerated or cleared."

"Then *how* was He *justified in the Spirit*?" I had to ask.

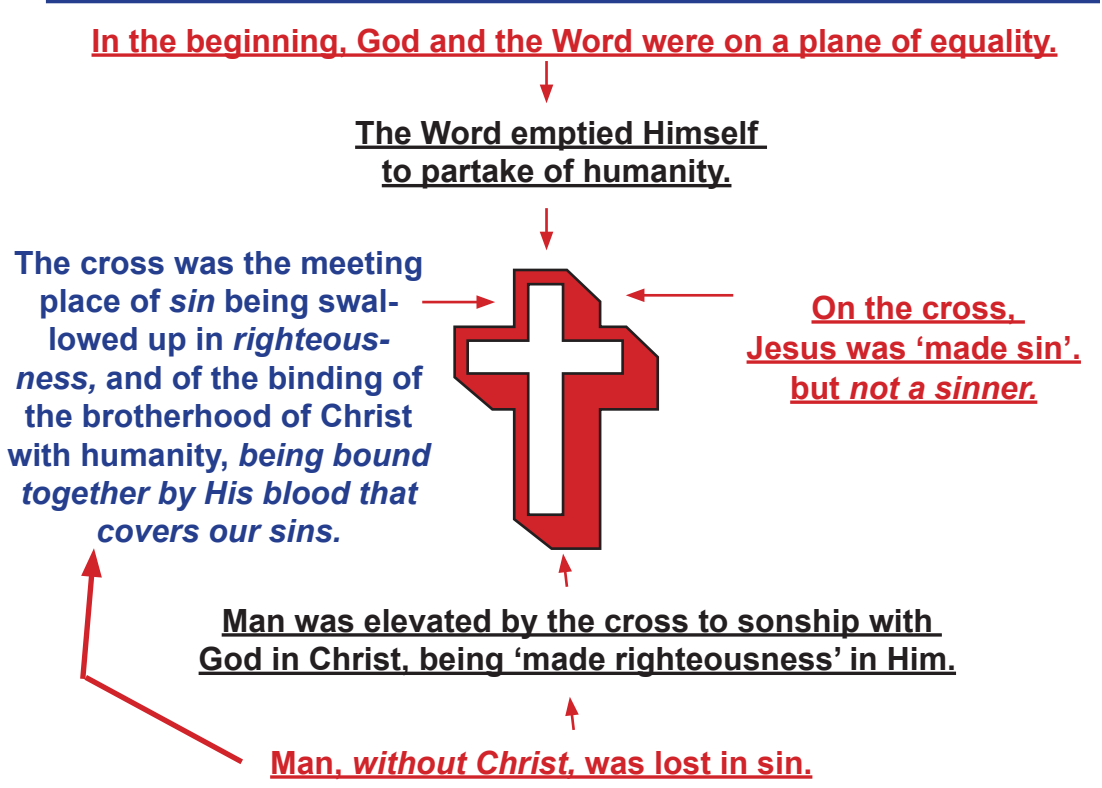
"Jesus paid **for us** with **His blood** on the cross — that is how *we were justified*, or made pure before God. But the responsibility for our sin-debt had then been transferred to Him. What did the Word have *in His spiritual account* that He could offer for us?"

"Before He came to the world, He was equal with God," I answered. "He had all the powers and rights that God had."

"You're right, son. There's no way that we can even imagine that kind of wealth! But He was willing to lay all of that aside to become the brother

of man, so that He could become the blood sacrifice for our sins. We've been thinking of that sacrifice as being for just 33 years, while He lived on the earth. But suppose **He was willing to accept the role of the brother of humans for all of eternity, so that we could be raised up from being lost sinners to being God's sons with Him, eternally.** *That* would have been a payment drawn from **His** spiritual 'bank account', wouldn't it?"

"Yes —" Ram answered slowly. "I have never even thought about such a thing. Could God — could Jesus — have *loved* us *that* much?"



For Discussion:

10. When Jesus took our sins, how is it described in 2 Corinthians 5:21?

11. What does God see when He looks at those who have become His children through the blood of Christ? _____

“I believe that’s what the Scriptures are saying, Ram: *His blood was shed to justify us*, but the only way the Word could then clear the debt he had assumed for our sins was by paying from **His own spiritual assets**. When the payment was made, the sin-record was taken away from Him — He was *justified in the Spirit*. But you know, when you buy something, you can’t take the money back. If we are to be God’s children, then Jesus has to continue to be our Brother. He can’t take back the purchase price He paid for us — His equality in the Godhead.”

“So maybe that was why He was in such agony in the Garden!” I exclaimed. “It wasn’t just the cross — it was a *forever* change for Him!”

“Yes, son. Hebrews 2:10 describes Him as the author of our salvation, bringing *many sons to glory*. That was how much He wanted us to be restored to God, as His children.”

(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 sins, 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 accrued 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 (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

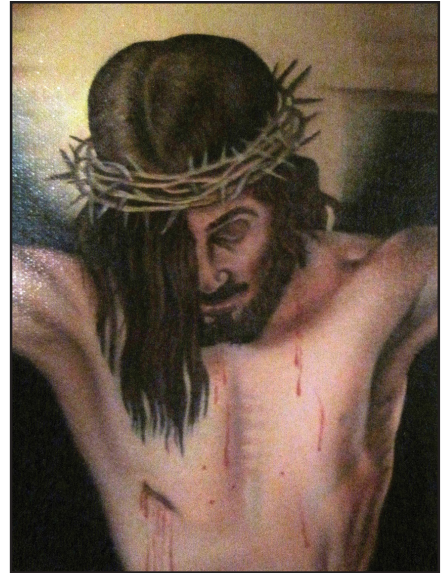
For Discussion:

1. What is the wage of sin?
2. What did Jesus bear on the cross?
3. God made Jesus to be _____ for us, so that we can become _____.

4. Our iniquity — sin — was laid on whose record?
5. Explain how Jesus paid for our sins spiritually.
6. Was the change in the Word’s relationship in the Godhead a physical change or a spiritual one? For how long does it continue?

After Death

Chapter Nine



I had some important questions to study out, and I decided to spend some time on them each evening the following week. We had read that Jesus died for us, but I knew that the Scriptures said that He was brought back to life. No other “holy man” in other religions had been resurrected. This set Jesus apart, as being *the Lord* He claimed to be.

What I wanted to know was, “When Jesus was resurrected, was He still a man, or had He gone back to being like He was before He was born as a human?” I wanted to find, in the Bible, statements that would support what we had learned about *an eternal sacrifice*, or statements that would show we were wrong.

So I got the concordance and started looking up, and high-lighting, Scriptures dealing with *resurrection*, *dead*, *death*, and other related words.

I found that Jesus had said, “...I am the resurrection and the life...” (John 11:25). In

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.

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

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

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). _____

those words He seemed to be promising victory over death, for Himself and for people who would believe in Him.

I knew that as the Word — as God — He was Spirit. But when He emptied Himself and was born as a human, He lived and died as a man (Hebrews 2:14). So was He resurrected as Spirit only? or as a man? The search for answers was on!

I read in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' meetings with His disciples after His resurrection. Luke 24:36-43 says:

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 a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.

So it was as a human that He was resurrected! Since he had promised life to His followers, I found that 1 John 3:2 tells what the resurrection will be for us:

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.

These verses describe "after death" and "resurrection" bodies. They are saying:

(1) that Jesus' resurrected body was the same one He had had before His death, except that it had been changed to an immortal substance.

(2) that our resurrected bodies will be like His! So the brotherhood between Himself and humans continues!

I came across a verse in Colossians 1:18 where Jesus was called the **first-born from the dead**. I knew that Lazarus and others had been raised to

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?_____

life by Jesus and His apostles, so I was wondering why He would be called **“the firstborn from the dead.”** What was different about His resurrection? “Of course!” I told myself: “He didn’t die again like those other people did! He was the first one to be resurrected in the *changed, immortal form of body* that all of us will have! 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 explained that change:

Behold, I tell you a mystery: 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

And Romans 8:11 said more about the resurrection:

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.

The changed bodies we’ll have are talked about in Philippians 3:20,21:

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 conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

All of these verses were saying what we had decided from our earlier studies: that Jesus’ resurrection is our guarantee that we will be resurrected, and that our bodies will be the same as His!

The Resurrection — by Whose Power?

I was puzzled by the statement in Romans 8:11:

... if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you

I remembered something He had said about *laying down His life and taking it again*, so I looked in the concordance until I found John 10:17,18:

Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.

So who raised Jesus? Did He raise Himself? Did the Holy Spirit raise Him? or was it God? I remembered that we had talked about John 5:26 where it says that **God had given Jesus the power of life**, and then I noticed the last line of John 10:18: **“... this command I have received from My Father.”** So Jesus’ power to lay down His life and to take it up again was power that God gave to Him! He took back His life through the Holy Spirit, but God was the One who gave Him the power over life! So the puzzle was solved!

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.

After the Resurrection

Dad and Mom shared the study one night. We decided to make a list of things and/or descriptions of Jesus after His resurrection. That would help us to have a better picture of how much or little change there was as a result of His sacrifice for sins. I was still on my quest to see if any Scriptures showed a return to the way He existed with God before being born as a human.

In John 17:5, in the prayer in Gethsemane before His betrayal, Jesus prayed:

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

“Woah!” I said with surprise. “Is this verse saying everything went back the way it was before the beginning of creation?”

“Maybe we’ve reached a wrong conclusion,” Dad admitted. “Let’s look closer: He’s talking about *equal glory with God*, and as it had been *before the world was!* That does seem to be saying plainly that the sacrifice ended with His death.”

“Except for one thing,” Mom said.

“What’s that?”

“In the beginning, life, power and equal glory were the Word’s *inherently*, simply because He was One of the Godhead. But in this verse, He is asking God to glorify Himself. That shows continued submission and dependence even after His resurrection.”

“Well, Mom! You ARE RIGHT! And Dad and I didn’t even notice that He was *asking* rather than *claiming* the glory as His own right.”

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? _____

King of Kings

“How about this verse?” Dad asked, “where Jesus is called King of kings, *now*, since He has gone back to God?”

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

“And in Matthew 28:18, Jesus says plainly,

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

“It can’t be better than that,” Mom said.

“But, hey! There it is again — *given* — He’s saying He has *all power and authority* because God has given it to Him,” Dad said.

Exalted by God

“Philippians 2:5-8 is one verse that says He emptied Himself and became obedient even to the point of death on the cross,” Mother read.

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”, American Standard Version; “but stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity]” Amplified N.T.), **taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

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).

“And verses 9-11 show what happened as a result,” Dad said:

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:

- (1) His name is above every name.
- (2) Every knee will bow to Him.
- (3) Every tongue will confess that He is Lord.

“But there’s that part again,” I said, “about God being the One doing all those things for Him because He was obedient to the Father’s will — just like He was praying in the Garden: ‘**not My will but Yours be done**’.”

Given a Kingdom

“In Daniel 7:13,14, Daniel wrote:

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.

“Jesus had said to the disciples before He sent them out to evangelize the world and before His ascension to heaven, ‘**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**’ (Matthew 28:18,19).”

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 and is not of this world, but is a spiritual kingdom, over which He reigns as sovereign king.”

“The scene Daniel was describing in chapter 7 of his book,” Dad explained, “was what began on the Mount of Olives, in Acts 1:9:

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

“When Jesus came back into God’s presence, having completed everything He had been sent to earth to do, God *gave* Him the kingdom, the *family* that would be washed clean of its sins by Jesus’ blood.”

“So Jesus isn’t limited by living in this world in a body that will die again,” I suggested, “but all of these verses show that things haven’t changed between Him and God. God is still the One *giving* Him all that He has and is.”

“This verse ties in with that thought,” said Mother:

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.... (1 Timothy 2:5).

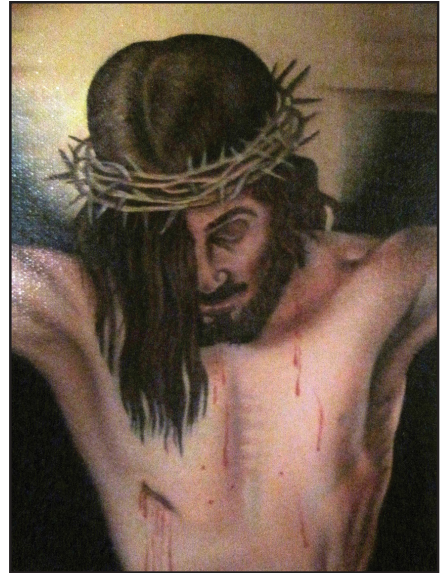
“Isn’t that amazing? that the Scriptures say so plainly that the One who stands — today, in Heaven — between God and man is, Himself, the **MAN, Christ Jesus!** So even now He continues to be one with humans, just as He was when He was in the world! What a price He paid for us!”

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? _____



Our Response

Chapter Ten

I had asked Mohammed and Ram if they would like to go with us to worship the following Sunday, and they agreed. They had never attended a Christian worship meeting before, so I explained what we would be doing.

As it turned out, brother Winters' sermon was just what they needed to hear. I was amazed at how new and exciting it sounded to me, listening through their ears!

He began: "Our lesson this morning deals with our response to Jesus and all that He has done to save us. On the one hand we see the continual preparation, built layer on layer, to provide the way for man to be reconciled to God. The physical penalty for sin was paid in the death of Jesus; the spiritual commitment was 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.

For Discussion:

1. Has God made it possible for every soul to be saved through Jesus' death? _____

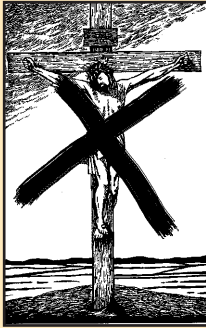
2. Who comes to Christ? _____ and _____

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.

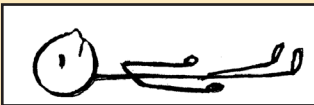


But, suppose the story had stopped there? What if there had been NO CROSS and NO RESURRECTION? Could anyone have been saved by Christ's mental acceptance alone?



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?

"Among the world's population, not all really learn from the Father's 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 ...

The Commitment

"Some people hear the message 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, 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.

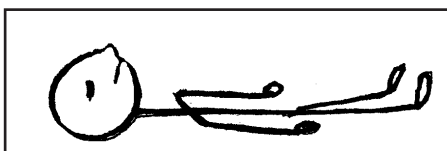
"No doubt, the turning point, the moment of commitment, is a crucial part of the process of salvation. *When*, in our study, have we considered a parallel event? Was it not in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus reached the point of ultimate commitment to man, when He struggled to submit to the will 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?**

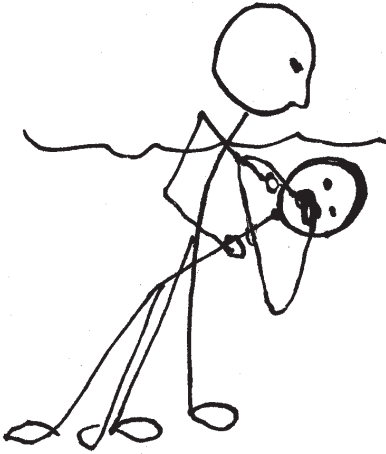
Dying with Christ

“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)

For Discussion:

- 3. Explain why faith and a mental commitment to Christ are not enough to save us.**
- 4. What must we obey from the heart? _____**
- 5. What form does the Gospel take in our own lives, as we obey a “form” of the Gospel? _____**



“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 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,



For Discussion:

6. 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.

7. Can we be in the kingdom without the “new birth”? How would you explain the new birth? _____

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).

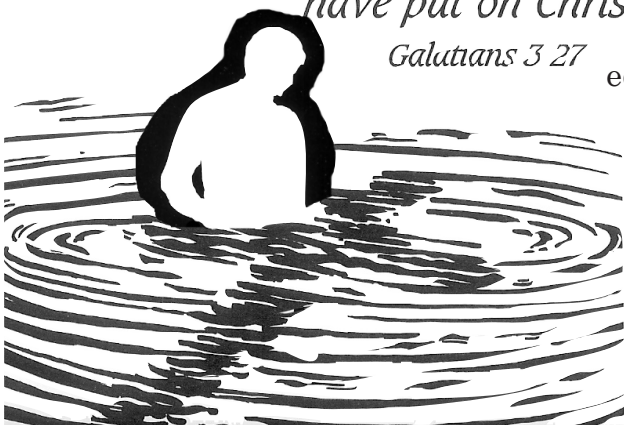
"Being born anew, a man is described in this way:

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?

*For as many of you
as were baptized into Christ
have put on Christ*

Galatians 3:27



"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?'

"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

For Discussion:

8. Is baptism only a ritual? _____
9. What did Jesus say in Mark 16:16? _____
- _____
10. Baptism is a picture of what? _____
11. What is washed away in baptism? _____
12. When do we "put on" Christ? _____

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 in His own body as He suffered death on the cross. 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

For Discussion:

- 13. What is our answer to Gethsemane? _____**
- 14. What is our answer to Calvary? _____**
- 15. Most denominational doctrines are in error on what subject? _____**
- 16. Which things do not matter greatly to Satan? _____**
- 17. What is his goal? _____**

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 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 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... through 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 new-born 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

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.

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**.

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**.

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 Continuation of Christ’s Brotherhood

“Other 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 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).

For Discussion:

18. Spiritually, we can choose to be in _____ family or in _____.
19. We are all sons of God through _____ in Christ Jesus.
20. But how do we “put on” Christ? _____
21. When did the church begin? Where? By Whom? Whose name does it wear? _____

... 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 humanity. 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**.

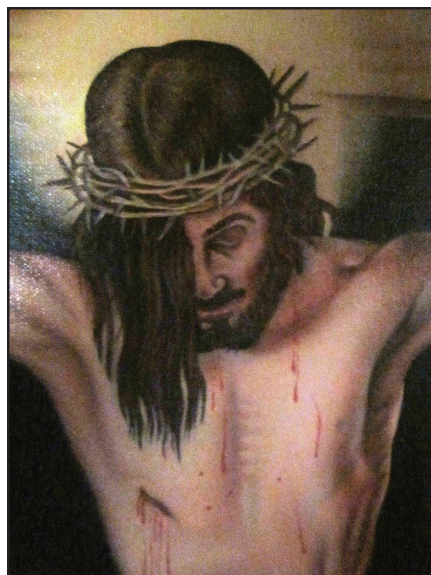
“All of this has been done to break down the wall of sin that separates us from God. If you have not yet been born into God’s family, we urge you to consider our Lord’s invitation. Do you **believe that He is the Son of God?** Are you willing to **turn away from sin**, from the world, and from all other religious beliefs? Will you **confess your faith in Him as Lord?** Are you ready to be **buried with Him in baptism** so that you can be raised to walk a new life? We pray that you will come to Him for salvation.”

For Discussion:

- 20. How many families does Christ have? _____**
- 21. Christians are heirs of God, and _____ with their Brother, Jesus Christ.**
- 22. Through Jesus, spiritually we are becoming _____**
-

The Memorial

Chapter Eleven



Both Ram and Mohammed were quiet as we took them home after worship. I was hoping they were thinking about their response to brother Winters' lesson.

It was Thursday before Ram called, though. He asked if we could go together and talk to brother Winters. "Sure!" I agreed. "I'll call him and see if we can come now."

Ram seemed a little nervous in brother Winters' office. "I want to ask some questions," he said. "I have talked to my parents about the things of Jesus. I want to be a Christian."

"That's a wonderful decision, Ram! I'm sure your Mom and Dad will want to be present when you're baptized."

"Yes," Ram agreed. "They are at work now but they said they can come here after five."

"That will be fine," brother Winters said. "I'll call the elders, too, and see if they can come. Anthony, do you want to call your parents?"

"Sure! They'll be here! What about Mohammed, Ram? Would he want to come?"

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?

“I asked him already, and he says no. He says his parents don’t want him to study these things any more. They may put him into a school at the mosque.”

“I’m sorry about that, Ram,” brother Winters said. “I’ll try to talk to them. Now, you said you have another question. What is that?”

“I want to know about the part of the worship Sunday — about the small piece of bread everyone ate, and the small cup. What meaning does that have?”

“It is a very special part of Christian worship, Ram. There are two things that we do because Jesus died for us. The first one is our baptism into Christ. Sometimes people make the mistake of thinking that baptism is just a ritual, like so many of the rites performed in other religions. But baptism is much more than that.

“In the lesson Sunday, I said that just as Jesus’ death on the cross was the point in time when He took our sins and died for them — **the binding point of Himself with humanity** — in the same way baptism is our binding point with Him. We choose Him instead of the world and sin, dying to that old life, and we are buried with Him in baptism, like He was buried in the grave. Then we are raised from baptism as a new person, born into the family of God.”

“So that’s our death and burial and resurrection?” I asked.

The Bread that Memorializes His Body

“It sure is, Anthony. That’s why it’s not a ‘ritual’; it’s our commitment to Him, just as His agony

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:

- 1. Lead the students in a discussion of (1) their thinking concerning the “age” of becoming answerable to God for their behavior. Discuss if, and at what age, they were baptized.**
- 2. Is it common for young people to be baptized before they really understand what they are doing? Discuss some possible reasons for this.**

in the Garden, followed by His death on the cross, were His commitment to us. We couldn't be saved today if He had not gone through those things; and we can't be saved unless we go through our commitment to Him!

“But, concerning your question about the Lord’s Supper, Ram, that is the second ‘memorial’ we have for Jesus. Where baptism is a once-in-a-lifetime event for us, the Supper is *a weekly renewal of our commitment to Him*. It began in this way: on the night Jesus was betrayed and arrested, He gave the disciples this memorial:

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 about this memorial supper, Jesus had said these things,

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).

“Was Jesus saying that we eat His real body?” Ram asked, puzzled.

“No, but those who were hearing Him were confused about the meaning of His words. In verse 66, John recorded that many of those who had followed Him went back after He made those statements. For us, living 2000 years after His death, it isn't difficult to understand that He was saying that we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine in memory of the body and blood He gave for us. Before His crucifixion, He explained:

For Discussion:

- 3. Why is baptism more than a ritual? _____**
- 4. What is our once-in-a-lifetime commitment? _____**
- 5. What is our weekly renewal of that commitment? _____**
- 6. 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.**

Take, eat; this is My body ... (Matthew 26:26).

Remember, through this memorial, **the body** which was given for you ... (Luke 22:19).

As often as you eat this bread... (1 Corinthians 11:26).

“Early Christians came together each first day of the week — the day we call Sunday — to remember their Lord’s death in this Supper.

They were taught:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body (1 Corinthians 11:28,29).

Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life ... (John 5:54).

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).

The Head and His Body

“But just as baptism is more than a ritual — *it is a commitment and a birth* — so, eating this weekly memorial supper is more than a remembrance. In eating the bread which is His body, we make a renewal of our commitment to Jesus to *be His body in the world today!*

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).

“These verses are saying that Jesus is the head and that we, the church, are His body in the world, Ram. In our own physical bodies, what does the head do?”

“It tells the rest of the body what to do,” answered Ram.

“You’re right. And that’s the way it is with Jesus and us. He is the head. In His word He has written the way He thinks and behaves, and He’s also told us what He wants His body to do.

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? _____

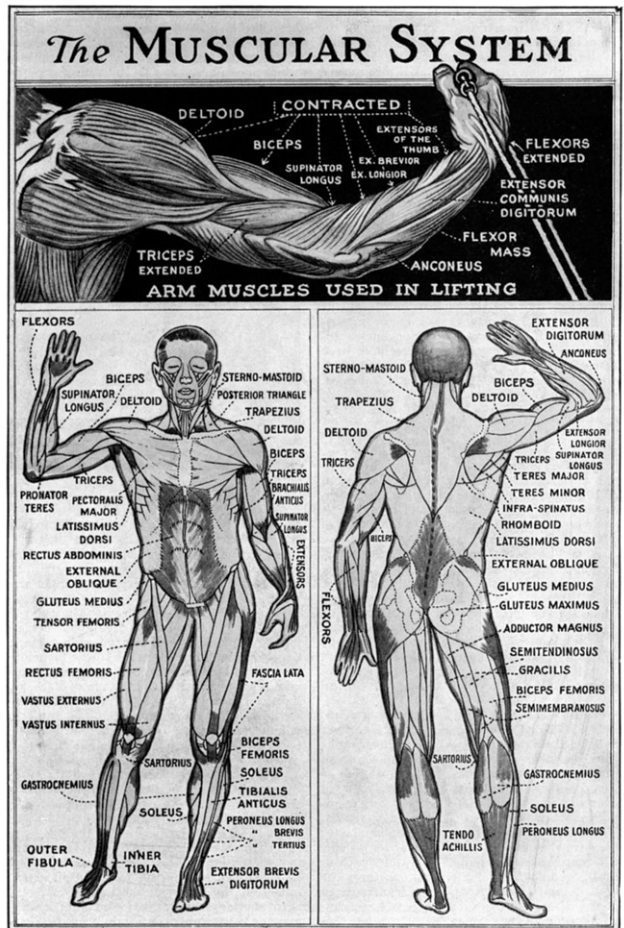
“Think about it like this: We’ve talked about what it meant for Jesus to lay aside the powers and rights He had as One of the God-head and to be born into a human body. We know what a limiting thing that was for Him, to live 33 years as a human. We’ve talked about what a sacrifice it was for Him to die instead of us. But have you thought about what these verses are saying? that for 2000 years Jesus has been working in the world through His body, the church — and through individual Christians?”

“I don’t know just what that means,” admitted Ram.

“Well, suppose your head tells your eyes and fingers to work together making a beautiful piece of art. If they obey, your head will be pleased. But suppose, when the message goes out from your head, your body does nothing. How would your head feel about that?”

“Not good. I know what you mean, now! My friend’s father had a stroke and is paralyzed. His head thinks but his body doesn’t do what his head is telling it to do. Is it like that sometimes with Jesus, when He is telling us what to do?”

“Yes, Ram, sometimes it’s like that! And think how limiting that must be for Jesus! He’s at God’s right hand, as King of kings and Lord of lords — but His body in this world is us. He wants us to love the people of the world like He does. He wants us to teach and live like He would. And how wonderful



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? _____

it is when we listen to the Head and move as His eyes and mouth and hands and feet! But how frustrating it must be for Him when we forget why we're in the world, when we are unconcerned about lost souls or the hurting people around us.

“And what is even more of a betrayal to Him — think how He feels when those of His body use God’s name in vain, or fill their bodies with liquor, or behave immorally, or entertain themselves with evil things, or lie or cheat or steal! He hates sin, so when we who are His body fill our lives with sin, just think how that hurts Him!”

“I wouldn’t want someone to do that to me,” said Ram. “I hadn’t thought about all of that.”

“But this is the close relationship you will have with Christ after your baptism, Ram. You must remember always that you will walk every day in the world as His body, representing Him in all that you say and do.

“And the bread that we eat in the memorial supper is our commitment, renewed every week, **to be His body in the world.**”

The Blood of His Covenant

“Jesus also said, as He took the cup at the supper:

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).

“Ram, just as Jesus’ body is life in us, as He explained in John 6:57, “**...he who feeds on Me will live because of Me**”, **His blood is also life in us!** We drink the cup of the fruit of the vine as a memorial of the blood He gave for us on the cross.”

“But we think of blood with death, not life,” Ram objected.

“Yes, we do,” answered brother Winters, “because usually when we see blood it is because something has gone terribly wrong. But even as early as the writing of Genesis, God said, ‘**You shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood**’ (**Genesis 9:4**). Doctors and scientists know now that the life of the body truly is in the blood.”

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? _____**

“How is that?” I asked.

“Let’s look at some scientific facts about blood, boys,” answered brother Winters. “Our bodies are made up of *seventy to one hundred trillion cells*, and the amazing thing is that not one of those cells would continue to live if its supply of blood was cut off! Within our bodies is a huge river, *60,000 miles long*, according to scientists, beginning and ending at the heart. From the heart, this river flows out into smaller and smaller passages, to reach every cell. And what does this river of blood do?”

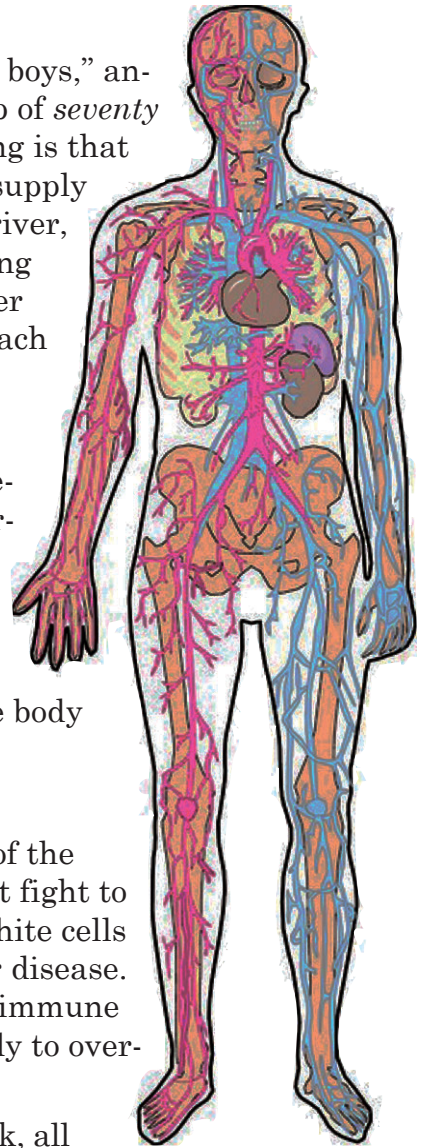
“(1) Blood nourishes...”

“Blood is made up of different kinds of cells, designed to do different things. Red blood cells nourish each of the trillions of cells in the body, while taking away waste materials — toxins — that have collected in the cells. As long as the cells are nourished and cleansed continually, they remain healthy and able to do their work within the body throughout their normal life cycle.

“(2) Blood overcomes...”

“The white blood cells are the defense system of the body. Invaders are met by warrior blood cells that fight to destroy whatever threatens life. Certain of the white cells become imprinted with the identity of the fever or disease. These continue to live for years — soldiers in our immune system — held in reserve so that they will be ready to overcome that particular invader if it attacks again.

“Sometimes people think that when they are sick, all they have to do is get the right medicine and they will be well. But it’s the white blood cells that determine whether or not we actually overcome a disease.



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? _____



The bread and the juice of communion.

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?

Medicines can help, until the body has time to make enough of the right kind of white cells to win the battle, but medicines can't win by themselves.

“I know you boys have heard of AIDS — that's a disease which destroys the body's immune system. In

other words, the white blood cells are not multiplied, according to the need, and finally the body dies because its defense mechanism in the blood has failed. The blood is no longer able to overcome.

“(3) Blood cleanses...

“After the invader has been overcome, the white blood cells *clean up and remove the enemy that has been destroyed*. Infection, redness, swelling and fever are indicators telling us that our blood is doing its job of defending and cleansing our bodies.

The Parallel

“Now, boys, at the time Jesus was telling His disciples that they must drink of His blood if they were to live, no one knew all of these things about the way the blood works to keep us alive and well. But the Word knew, because He and the Holy Spirit who empowered Him were there at the time of the creation of Adam and Eve, involved in their creation. He knew that our physical bodies simply cannot live without the nourishing flow of blood

to every cell. In the same way, He knew that without His blood nourishing us and every member of His spiritual body — the church — we cannot have spiritual life! It's a wonderful parallel, one that truly helps us to understand how utterly dependent we are on Christ for our daily spiritual life!”

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? _____

“Yes, what He said was true,” I agreed, “but what about ‘overcoming’?”

“That’s another interesting parallel, Anthony. No one knew then about immunity and there were no vaccinations to make people immune to diseases. Now we know that a small exposure to a disease, in the form of a vaccination, can cause our bodies to go to war to overcome that invader. Millions of white cells are imprinted with the invader’s identification. Then if the body is later exposed to the full-fledged disease — small pox, for instance, or diphtheria, or polio — those cells that have already ‘overcome’ will rush to the rescue, armed to destroy that particular enemy.

“Jesus said, ‘... **but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world**’ (John 16:33). He was saying, ‘Don’t worry about the dangers in the world! I’ve already overcome them, and my ‘knowing’ blood in you will enable you to overcome too! In Revelation 12:11, we read, ‘... **they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.**’”

“What about blood cleansing our bodies?” I asked.

“Just as our blood removes toxins and wastes from our bodies, cleansing us, Jesus’ blood continually cleanses us spiritually from the sin in our lives. In 1 John 1:7 we are told, ‘... **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**’”

“So, Ram, that’s what the ‘small cups’ are about. They are our memorial to the blood Jesus shed for us on the cross. We partake every week of the fruit of the vine so that His blood may do for our souls what our own flow of blood does for our physical bodies. Does ‘the Lord’s Supper’ make more sense to you now?”

“Yes, sir, it does. Thank you for explaining it to me. Now I’ll be able to think about all of these things when I eat the Supper after I become a Christian,” Ram answered.

“I believe I hear your parents. Let’s go and meet them,” brother Winters said, opening the door. My Mom and Dad were just coming into the building, too, along with brother George and brother Holmes.

Ram introduced Mr. and Mrs. Kumar to all of us and then brother Winters began to explain about Ram’s desire to be baptized. Ram had been talking to them all along, so they had no objections. They seemed interested in learning more, themselves, so brother Winters said that he would be glad to answer any of their questions whenever they had time to sit down and study. Then he turned to Ram.

“Ram, we have studied many things about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Do you have any questions about any of these things?”

“No, sir. I believe I understand.”

“I have to be clear about one point, Ram. In Hinduism there are many gods and goddesses, and sometimes people think that they can add Jesus to

all of the Hindu deities they already worship. We've talked at length about the one God of the Bible, and that Jesus is not just one Lord among many, but that He is **the Lord**. Becoming a Christian means turning away from the religion of Hinduism and following God and the Bible alone. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, sir. I have been thinking, I want to change my name, sir. When I am a Christian, I don't want to be called by the name of a Hindu god."

"Well, son, we don't require that you change your name, but I can understand your feelings. Have you discussed this with your parents?"

"Yes, sir. They say that I can be called by my grandfather's name — Sajan."

"Then, Sajan it will be!" laughed brother Winters. "Now, Sajan, before your baptism, I want to ask you to make a confession before these witnesses. **Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?**"

"Yes, sir, I believe that Jesus is God's Son, and that He died for my sins. I want to be a Christian."

"Wonderful!"

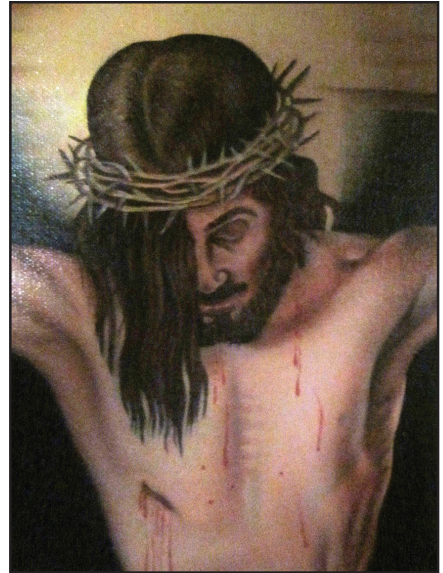
It was an exciting thing to me to see brother Winters take Ram — no, Sajan — up into the baptistery and to hear him say, **"On the confession of your faith in Jesus Christ, I baptize you, Sajan, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for the forgiveness of your sins, and so that you may receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit. Amen."**

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 _____.

The Reigning Lord

Chapter Twelve



That was a happy night for me! Knowing that our studies had helped Sajan to have faith in God and to become a Christian was the best thing I could think of. I knew he would be depending on me a lot, and I didn't want to let him down.

I couldn't help but be disappointed about Mohammed, though, and I wondered what he would say when we would meet next in school.

Of course Dad and Mom were happy, too, about Sajan being baptized. I kept calling him "Ram" and they said it would take a little time to get used to his new name, but they agreed that it would be better to be called after his grandfather than after a Hindu god.

That night we studied some more from the book on Christ. After going through the verses with Dad and Mom about Jesus' resurrection and that He went back to Heaven to reign at God's right hand, I wanted to know more about what's going on with Him right now! Has He finished His work? Is He just waiting until it's time to come back and end everything? What's He doing now?

We decided to study the chapter, "The Reigning Lord", beginning with the prophecy in Daniel 7:13 and 14:

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.

Jesus, Himself, had said just before returning to God:

All Authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18).

“But since Jesus’ kingdom is not a real kingdom that we can see in this world, how is He reigning now?” I asked.

“There’s another thing,” Dad said. “The number of people who are true Christians, who have learned about the Lord’s church and have become a part of it, is very small compared to many other religious groups in the world. Think of the hundreds of millions of people who believe in Christ but who are members of churches teaching doctrines contrary to the Scriptures. And then think of the millions who are Hindus, the other hundreds of millions who are Muslims, and the masses who follow Buddhism, Confucianism and other Eastern religions. Looking at those figures, we might feel small and insignificant.”

“But that doesn’t mean that God is small. The fact is that He has never forced people to follow Him,” Mom said. “You know He could just make Himself visible to everybody in the world — like the description in Revelation when every eye will see Jesus at His return — and then everyone would be overwhelmed with His greatness and power and glory. No one would be able to resist acknowledging Him as God. But He wants us to *choose* Him, to *love* Him. That’s why He reveals Himself by spoken revelation, rather than just showing an irresistible visual revelation of Himself.”

“And Jesus had said that when it comes to choosing, “... **Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it**” (Matthew 7:14), Dad added.

“So Jesus’ kingdom will never be the biggest?” I asked.

“That’s right, Anthony, so we shouldn’t be surprised when the majority won’t listen to the Gospel. We’ve already been told to expect that. But, still,

John gives a description in Revelation of the response of people to the greatness and power of God when they are confronted with a full realization of Him:

“And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:16,17).

Whether this describes a literal scene when “**the great day of His wrath has come**”, or whether it is only figurative, this passage clearly shows what the reaction of unbelieving and rebellious people will be when they realize that they are face to face with the Judge of all mankind.

For Discussion:

1. Do you know the approximate number of members of the Lord’s church in the U.S.? _____
2. In the rest of the world? _____
3. How did Jesus describe the way to eternal life? _____

Jesus is Lord over all that is seen and all that is unseen: the physical universe and world, and the spiritual realm.

Name some of the things in these “worlds” over which He has control:

Is His Lordship real or is it just a religious expression used by Christians to make us feel more important?

victory is promised to those who obey Jesus, because He truly is King over everything.”

“How?” I asked.

Jesus’ Power over Nature

“Well,” Dad answered. “It’s interesting that humans are very short-sighted. We often count only ourselves as the important measuring stick. But Jesus said He had been given authority over *heaven and earth*. Just think of what the Hebrew writer said:

God ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high... (Hebrews 1:1-3).

“We are surrounded by His creation. Our bodies could be thought of as a miniature world. We are made up of about 70 to 100 trillion cells, each one working together, doing just what it was designed to do, and each one very much dependent on the rest of the body to survive.

“We could enlarge that picture billions of times and imagine our very intricate and inter-related universe. The creation is like a huge woven picture, with everything being dependent on everything else — and all of it must work together, *and it must work right*, or else the whole creation would break down. The Hebrew writer said that not only did the Word create everything, but it is *by the power of His word that the creation is held in place, working as it was designed to do!*”

“Huh! We don’t even think about Jesus doing that, because we just think that everything will go on like it is — sort of, by its own power,” I said.

“But nothing would go on in this ‘normal’ way if it were not for *Jesus’* power in the heavens and in the earth!” Dad answered. “Listen to what God said to Job about His power over the oceans:

For Discussion:

3. Discuss what is meant by the statement that Jesus is upholding all things by the word of His power.

4. How were all things created and put in their place at the beginning? (Genesis 1:1-31) _____

Definitions

Free will: The ability to make one's own decisions, not controlled by fixed fate.

Predestination: The doctrine that God decides beforehand who will be saved and who will be lost, and the individual can do nothing to change his "fate".

Conditional: A conclusion or situation that is dependent on the fulfillment of something else; i.e., the Scriptures teach that the salvation of the soul is conditional, dependent on our proper response to God's requirements.

Unconditional: Without prior requirements or stipulations. God loves humanity unconditionally, but He does not save anyone unconditionally.

This far you may come, but no further, and here your proud waves must stop! (Job 38:11).

"And I remember what the disciples said when Jesus stilled the storm on Galilee," I said.

Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him? (Matthew 8:27).

Jesus Overrides in Government

"But what about the governments in the world? Is Jesus really the King over the kings and rulers?" I asked. "Some of them are really bad. How can that happen?"

"Just as God doesn't *force* anyone to believe and obey Him, neither does He force a world leader to be good or bad," Dad explained. "Maybe the best way for us to understand is to look back at history and what God says about that. To the Pharaoh in Egypt, 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 didn't *force* the Pharaoh to disobey Moses' request to let the people of Israel leave Egypt. Pharaoh 'exalted' himself against the Israelites, and against God. Knowing beforehand what Pharaoh's attitude would be, God had 'raised him up' at that particular time, to use his opposition as an example for the world. And it has been just as God planned — who hasn't heard of what happened to Pharaoh and the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus?"

"Sure," I agreed. "Everybody knows about the Exodus!"

"After bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, God made this promise:

Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which

For Discussion:

5. What other miracles did Jesus perform, showing His power over nature and its laws? _____

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 which you have not known (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

“God’s promises are always conditional, and what happens to us — or what happened to Israel — is not because of God’s *weakness* but because they and we so often make wrong choices,” Dad explained.

“When the Israelites repeatedly chose other gods instead of God, He used the brutal empire of Assyria to correct Israel:

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 [the king of 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? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws 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, who dwell in Zion, 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 10:5-7,12,13,15,24-26).

“Later, God used the kingdom of Babylon to correct the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Nebuchadnezzar was the king God raised up to do that work. But Nebuchadnezzar wasn’t aware of God’s involvement. He *thought* he had become great by his own power:

For Discussion:

- 6. On what condition does God promise to bless us? _____**
 - 7. On what condition does God promise that we will be punished? _____**
 - 8. Explain why God would “raise up” and give power to a wicked ruler. _____**
-



The king spoke, saying, “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).

“So God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his pride. And, opposite to the way the Pharaoh had responded to God, Nebuchadnezzar said,

“... I, Nebuchadnezzar, ... 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).

“Looking down the time-line, at the trial of Jesus, Pilate had demanded,

“Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” (John 19:10).

“But Jesus’ answer was:

“You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above” (John 19:11).

For Discussion:

9. What was Nebuchadnezzar’s great problem? _____
10. What admission did he make later? _____
11. Who did Pilate think was in control at the trial of Jesus? _____
12. Do most kings and people in authority ever think that the invisible God of heaven has control over them and their world? _____

“Before we go on, let’s summarize,” Mom suggested, “so we can keep in mind the general rules God uses in exercising His authority over rulers.”

(1) God allows all people the freedom of choice. He promises to bless the obedient and to punish the disobedient.

(2) God deals with rulers and nations according to their response to Him.

(a) Those who belong to His family — for instance, the Israelites of the Old Testament, and the church in this age — are dealt with on a father-child basis. Obedient children are nourished and blessed. Disobedient children must be corrected (Hebrews 12:5-7). If they repent they are forgiven; if not, they will finally 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, giving them time and opportunity to learn of God and obey Him. Good rulers — even though they are not true Christians — will be a blessing to good nations — even though they are not ‘Christian’. They would be counted as good in the sense of following the moral and just laws of conscience that are inborn in humans, as a part of being made in God’s image.

“OK,” Dad answered. “But God can and does empower harsh and evil rulers to be ‘rods of correction’ in the world. The Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians are examples.”

“I wonder,” Mom said, “if we’re seeing another example taking shape now. America — in fact, the whole of the Western world, which used to be guided by Biblical principles — all of these nations are moving further and further from God’s laws. A big percentage of the population is atheistic, with no belief in God. Then think of the homes that have been destroyed by divorce. And how many people don’t even bother to marry anymore. Immorality and all kinds of indecency are the norm these days. Abortion is the legitimate way to kill unwanted babies.”

“And the acceptance of homosexuality is growing,” Dad agreed. “Now there’s the push to legalize marriage among lesbians and homosexuals. And it’s almost forbidden to mention God in public anymore.”

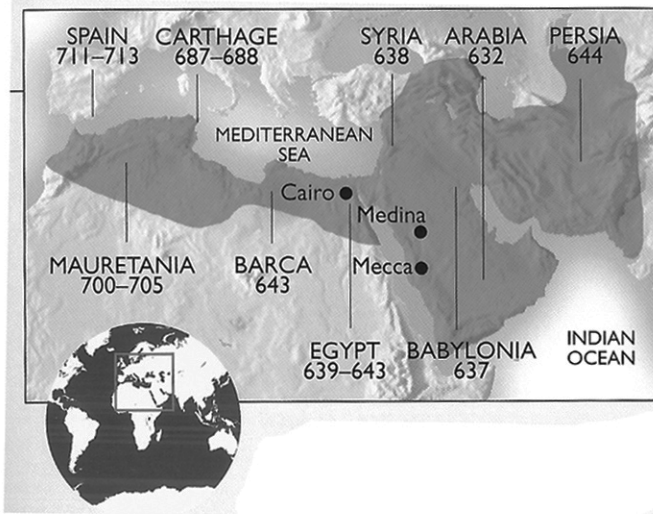
For Discussion:

13. Does God respond to His children’s obedience? _____ their disobedience? _____

14. Would God “raise up” or give strength to an evil ruler in today’s world, or did He do such things only in Old Testament times? _____

“Will God do anything about it?” I asked.

“If He’s following His past pattern, the terrorism we’re facing now may be His tool to intervene. Of course, the fundamentalist Muslims have the goal of ruling the world and of forcing Islam on everyone, as they did in the days of Mohammed. But God may be using them to give the world a choice: **Either wake up and turn back to the principles of righteousness; or experience a period of purging by extreme punishment.** Time will tell.”



“But, going back to our summary,” Mom said:

(3) Regardless of the power a ruler or a nation may seem to have, God is the ruler who allows, strengthens, or ends his authority.

“But how does Jesus rule **now**?” I asked. “This is not the age of miracles and of God speaking to rulers, so how is Jesus the King over kings?”

“Let’s read Romans 13:1-7,” Dad suggested. “That is God’s explanation:

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.

For he is God’s minister to you for good. 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

For Discussion:

15. How might God be using Muslim terrorism today? _____

16. According to Romans 13:1-7, who is God’s minister to execute judgment among the nations? _____

We need to understand the distinction between created spirit beings — angels— and created physical beings — humans. At the present time, with man under the sentence of death because of sin, angels hold a superior position to man. They live in God's presence and are His servants, ministering to the needs of those who will be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).

But humans in their original state were superior to angels, created only a little lower than the Godhead (Psalm 8:5) and a means of salvation has been provided for human redemption. We can obey God and become His children. We are promised an eternal inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).

Humans will not become angels in that new world.

In the Scriptures we read of:

“the Angel [messenger, Word] of the Lord, who was one of the Godhead, according to the context.

Angels who were created beings, sent out with a message or work to do.

Archangel, who is identified as Michael, “one of the chief princes” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Cherubim (above the Mercy Seat in the Temple (Exodus 37:7-9).

We also read of “fallen angels” (Jude 6); demons (Deuteronomy 32:17); Satan, who is the Devil, the dragon of Revelation 12:7-9.

conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.

“So from the beginning, man has been allowed to rule in his own world, but only under the authority granted to him by God. Whether he chooses to be under subjection, in obedience, or whether he chooses disobedience, he is a tool for good or evil to help achieve God's over-all purpose. God, Himself, is the one in actual control. And He has delegated that authority to Jesus,” Dad said.

Jesus Rules in the Spirit World

“But there's another part of Jesus' statement that we often forget,” Mom said. “Because we don't see *the spirit world*, we are not conscious of what's going on there.”

“Is that Heaven?” I asked.

“Yes, but more than Heaven, as a *place*. The spirit world is populated with **angelic beings** and with the **souls** who have been separated from their physical bodies in death, both the righteous and the unrighteous,” Dad explained. “Let's read Revelation 5:11 for a description of the angelic host:

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands....

“Just think what a teeming world that is!” Dad exclaimed. “But those angels do things other than worshiping before God's throne. The Hebrews writer said of angels:

For Discussion:

17. Do humans become angels after they die? _____
18. Can we see angels in their spirit form? _____ Why not? _____
-
19. What are some of the things angels do? _____

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? ... Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels (Hebrews 1:14; 13:2)

“You mean there are angels right here in our world?” I asked, incredulously.

“That’s what the Holy Spirit said through the Hebrews writer. Of course, we don’t see *spirit beings* with these physical eyes. We trust that they are doing for us the things we can’t do for ourselves, because that’s what the Bible says. But the writer also says that sometimes an angel may seem to be a human, and that because of that possibility, we should be hospitable even to those we don’t know. He said that *some* have, in that way, entertained angels without knowing that they were angels. If such a thing were not possible, God wouldn’t have said it in His word.”

“What a comforting thought,” Mom said.

“In the spirit world there are the disobedient spirit-beings, too,” Dad continued. “In 2 Peter 2:4, Peter explains:

... 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

“And in that spirit world are the souls of those who have died,” Mom said. “Jesus told something about that in the story of Lazarus and the rich man:

“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 torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom ...” (Luke 16:19-31).

“That’s right,” Dad agreed, “and 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.

“Another scene is given in Revelation 7:9-15:

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with

palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

“These are powerful descriptions of the other world that exists — the *real world*, actually, because it is made up of elements that don’t age and die,” Dad said. “But there is so much we really can’t understand about that world, because it’s so different from anything we as physical human beings have ever known. The important point, though, is that *all authority* over that world has been given to Jesus.”

Two Kingdoms

Mom read the conclusion of the chapter from the book on the sacrifice of Christ:

“Within the universe two kingdoms exist, by the tolerance of God which allows man freedom of choice. One of these is Satan’s domain. He has been the lord in his kingdom since the rebellious angels, first, and, later, Adam and Eve, chose disobedience instead of righteousness. This kingdom of evil 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 bring forgiveness of sins to obedient humans, and 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.

“Philippians 2:5-11 explains that Christ emptied Himself and humbled Himself in obedience,

...to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 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.

“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 to bear the penalty of sin for man, and having been obedient unto death, 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 His 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 by God. **(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:

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).

For Discussion:

20. Which are the two kingdoms that exist? _____
21. Which is the enduring, real world? _____
22. Who has all authority over both kingdoms? _____
23. Why was Jesus made King of kings? _____

“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:

... 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).

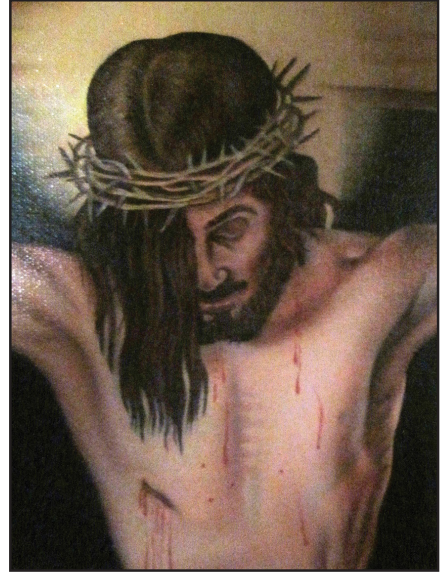
“Jesus Christ rules today, by authority derived from God.”

For Discussion:

1. Jesus said that _____ had been given to Him in _____ and on _____.
2. Who upholds all things by the word of His power? _____
3. Do the Scriptures say that God has used “enemy” kings and armies to correct the wrongs of His people? _____
4. According to Romans 13:1-7, the government authorities that exist are appointed by _____.
5. Who rules in the spirit world? _____
6. Do angels do anything in the world today? _____
7. Even though Jesus shares God’s glory now, and has been given all authority by God, He did not reclaim what? _____
8. Jesus rules today by _____ from _____.

The Eternal Son

Chapter Thirteen



After school the next day Sajan and I decided to go by brother Winters' office for another study.

"I'm sorry Mohammed couldn't come with you boys," brother Winters said when we told him why we had come. "I called his parents to see if I could visit in their home, but they said, 'Maybe later'. So, maybe with the passing of some time, they will be willing to talk, at least. Anyway, I'm glad you boys have come."

"Yes, sir," I said. "We wanted to ask a question."

"Fire away! I'll try to have the answer."

"When we first started this study about Jesus, you said that there have been five periods in His existence."

"That's right, Anthony. Do you remember what they are?"

"I think so. **The first one was from eternity, when He was 'the Word'**, equal in the Godhead. **The second was the Old Testament time**, when He was still equal with God but He appeared as 'the Angel of the Lord' or He spoke as God, in dealing directly with the people. He was the Mediator, even then."

"And the third?" asked brother Winters.

"I know," spoke up Sajan. **"He was born as a human."**

"Yes, He emptied Himself of the rights and powers in the Godhead and was born as the Son of God and the Son of man, subjecting Himself to God," agreed brother Winters.

"Then, **the fourth period is now — when He is at God's right hand, as King of kings and the Head over the church** (Ephesians 1:20-23). He said in Matthew 28:18 that God gave Him all authority in heaven and on the earth."

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

“So what will happen when He comes again and the world ends?” asked Sajan.

“Yes, when there’s no more sin and no more death, will everything go back the way it was, with Jesus being equal to God again?” I asked.

“Let’s look at some Scriptures for answers,” suggested brother Winters. “Revelation 19:11-16 is a good picture of the heavenly scene now and as we move to the final judgment:

Now 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 is 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 them 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.**

“When the end comes, the Day of Judgment:

... 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).

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were

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? _____

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 will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:46).

“All of those Scriptures are talking about the final judgment,” I said. “Jesus will be the judge because God has given Him that authority.”

“You’re right, Anthony. So, now what happens in the fifth period? Let’s look at some other Scriptures.

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 15:24-28).

“What do you think of those verses?” asked brother Winters.

“They say Jesus is reigning now, and that He will reign until ‘the end’, and then He will turn everything over to God!” I answered, surprised at what the verses were actually saying. “So, even though Jesus has all authority now, under God, in the real eternity to come, He will give up that authority?”

“That’s what it’s saying, Anthony.”

“But if Christians are already God’s children, and they are already saved from their sins, why doesn’t everything go back to the way it was with God in the beginning? Why does Christ not become equal again?” asked Sajan.

For Discussion:

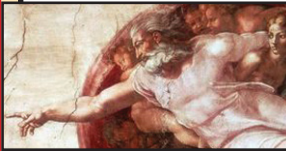
2. What will Jesus do with the kingdom? _____
3. What is the last enemy that will be destroyed? _____
4. At that time, after the judgment, the Son Himself will be subject to Whom? _____
5. Does Christ then become equal with God? _____
6. What significance would you think there is in the use of the name “Christ” in Galatians 4:7? _____

To which periods of existence do these names refer?

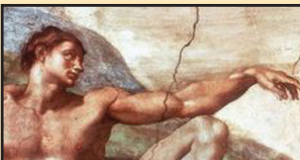
1. **The Word?** _____
2. **The Angel of the Lord?** _____
3. **Jesus Christ?** _____
4. **King of Kings?** _____
5. **Joint Heir and Brother?** _____



Sin



Between Man and God is the barrier of sin.



Christ becomes the bridge between God and man — the ONLY bridge.

“Let’s look at Galatians 4:4-7 for an explanation,” suggested brother Winters:

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.**

“These verses tell us some wonderful things,” brother Winters said. “Notice especially the very last word: **Christ.** What significance is there in God’s choice of that name?”

“I don’t know,” Sajan answered.

“He didn’t say **‘the Word’**; ‘Christ’ is the name given to the Messiah, to the One who was both the Son of God and the Son of Man.

He was the Person who took the form of humanity and died for man, was buried, and was resurrected.

So God is saying that it is the Spirit of Christ in our hearts Who enables us to have the Father-son relationship with God. And He says that *the sons are heirs of God*; but **how** are we God’s

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? _____

heirs? Through **the Holy Spirit?** Through **the Word?** No, it is through the Son — **Christ** — that we will inherit that new heaven and new earth!

“Or let me explain it another way. Picture God reaching out His hands to a lost humanity. Picture a lost humanity reaching out its hands to God. The problem is that huge wall of sin, or we might picture an impassable gulf. Jesus was born to remove that wall, to be a bridge across the gulf. But if you remove the bridge from the picture and put Him back with God as He was in the beginning, we have no way to reach God anymore!”

“I hadn’t thought about it like that,” said Sajan.

“You see, boys — we’ll never have the *rights of inheritance* by our own relationship with God! It’s only through the rights of our *Elder Brother* that we have any inheritance!

“Hebrews 7:28 tells us more about how long the Word will remain the Son:

... 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 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 requirements* to qualify Him as man’s Savior] were the actions of the Son — and **the Son has been perfected forever**, which is also saying that the Sonship is a relationship that will be forever.”

“Do you remember who created all things, Anthony?”

“Yes; the Word.”

“You’re right. And as Creator, He would also be the *Possessor* of all things, in position to *bestow* an inheritance but not to *receive* one. But 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).

“Another passage that adds to our information is found in Romans 8:15-17:

For Discussion:

- 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? _____**

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.”

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.

“Do you remember that in the verses in Galatians, we noticed that we are heirs through Christ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But this passage tells us another thing: We will be *joint heirs with Christ!* So let’s see what we’ve learned about our inheritance:

**Christ is the heir of God,
and His brothers are joint-heirs with Him,
so the inheritance will be:**

(1) The new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21,22).

He 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).

“On this side of eternity, we can’t really know what glories and positions of responsibility await the brothers of Christ. But we can understand the promise in that verse, so near the end of the Revelation of God: **Whatever Christ is, and has, will be shared by those who overcome through Him!**”

“Boys, the promise in Revelation is one of the last passages in the Bible, and it shows that Christ’s brotherhood with us will never end! For eternity, we will have the blessing of being the children of God because for eternity our Brother will be between God and us, making us the children of God through His Sonship.

“That’s why, even now, as faithful members of His Family, we approach God boldly, confident of His love, sure that He will accept us, because our

Brother's love speaks for us from the right hand of the Father. Our salvation is secured; His continual care for us, day by day, is also secured. Listen to what is written in Romans 8:31-39:

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 our Lord.

That night I had a hard time going to sleep. I kept thinking about the verses brother Winters had shown us, and I kept thinking about what a price Jesus had paid for us. I used to think, "He died for us." And that seemed like the biggest price He could pay — maybe because to us, as humans, death is the terrible thing we all face.

But now I could see that Christ's death — as important as it was, and as necessary as it was for His blood to cleanse us of our sins — was the inevitable result of Him taking the penalty for our sins as His own, because the Bible says that the *wages* of *sin* is *death*. But the *further sacrifice* was the *eternal* change in His relationship in the Godhead, in order to raise us up so that we can be the children of God.

The question kept going through my head, "**Could He really love me that much?**" Everything we had studied said He does. That thought really got to me. I couldn't keep the tears back, because I knew how many times I hadn't loved Him enough and hadn't been very interested in studying the Bible. I kept thinking, "**What can I do to show God and Jesus how sorry I am?**" Then I had a very good thought: "**He was willing to give up everything for me. I can make the promise now that my whole life will be His to use!**"

Concluding Discussion:

Give the class opportunity to ask questions, to summarize what they have learned, and to discuss how their relationship with God and Christ has been impacted by the things they have studied.

- 1. Will everyone be saved?**
- 2. How do you prove your answer?**
- 3. What is the message of the Gospel?**
- 4. How do we “obey a form of that doctrine”?**
- 5. What is the “new birth”?**
- 6. Why would Satan want to confuse people about the necessity of baptism?**
- 7. What is Jesus’ family?**
- 8. What does it mean (in Romans 8:16,17) when it says that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ?**

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 Covenantant at

JESUS
 His Church
 Jerusalem
 Apostles
 All Christians
 You and Me

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.

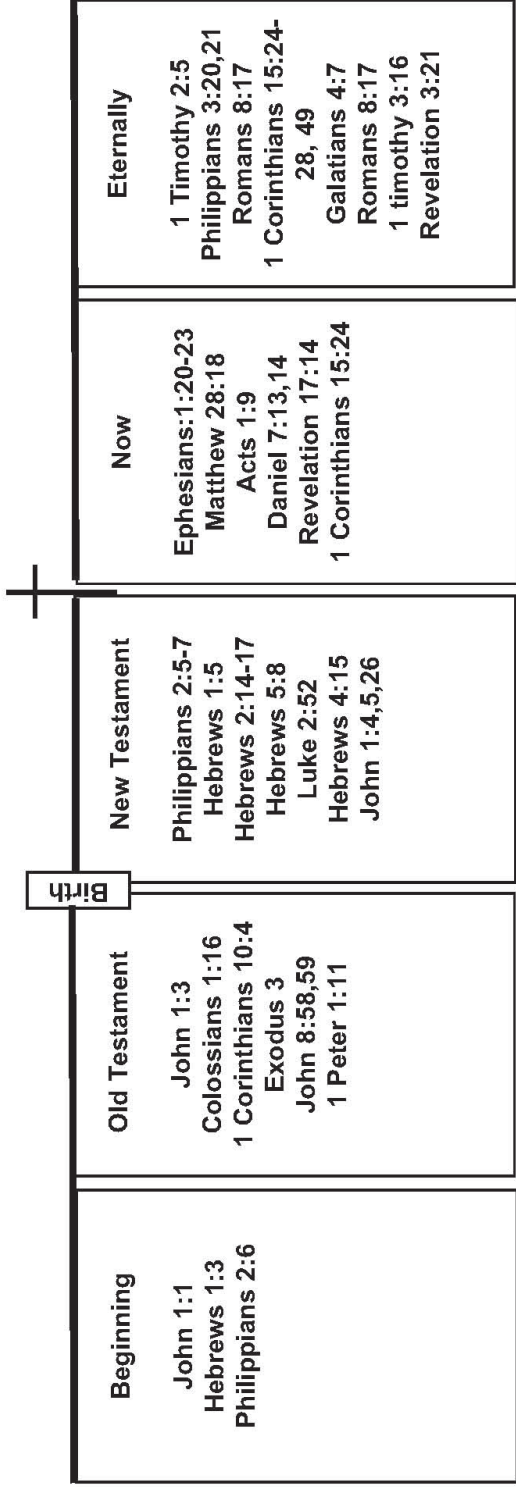
7. We will be JOINT HEIRS with Christ (Romans 8:17).
“...and if Children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”

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:

✿ **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.** †

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!

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: _____

