

Preaching  
the Whole  
Counsel of God  
Volume 9

Sermon Outlines  
by Louis Rushmore

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# Table of Contents

<b>THE STRAIT GATE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ANOTHER JESUS, ANOTHER SPIRIT &amp; ANOTHER GOSPEL .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>NECESSITY OF FAITH AND IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENCE.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>NO KNOWLEDGE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>GLUTTONY.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>I COME IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>LOST BOOKS OF THE BIBLE .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>A ROARING LION .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS THE CREATOR.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS PRE-INCARNATE GOD .</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS THE INCARNATE GOD</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS MASTER TEACHER .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AT THE CROSS.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS THE SAVIOR.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS MESSIAH AND KING ....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS HIGH PRIEST.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS MEDIATOR, INTERCESSOR &amp; ADVOCATE.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS LAWGIVER AND PROPHET .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS HEAD OF HIS CHURCH, HEAD OF HIS BODY AND HEAD OF HIS HOUSE.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS THE JUDGE .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>COME MEET JESUS AS THE PREEMINENT ONE.....</b>	<b>116</b>

<b>I WILL EXECUTE JUDGMENT .....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>A TIME TO BE BORN AND A TIME TO DIE .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTHERHOOD .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>IT TAKES A COMMUNITY .....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>FOCUS ON JESUS.....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>JESUS KNOWS .....</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>THE IMPACT OF FAITH.....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>IN APPRECIATION OF FATHERS.....</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>SAVIOR OF ALL MEN.....</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING .....</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>GOD IS.....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>BUY THE TRUTH AND SELL IT NOT.....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>I COME TO THEE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD #2.....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>ANOTHER GENERATION.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>YE SHALL NOT TURN ASIDE .....</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>THE WORD THAT GOD PUTTETH IN MY MOUTH.....</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>SHUT THE DOORS!.....</b>	<b>187</b>

# The Strait Gate

## Matthew 7:13-14

**Thesis:** To define the carefulness with which Christians need to purposely prepare for eternity.

### **Introduction:**

1. No one will awake on eternity's dawn to find that he or she accidentally arrived within heaven's eternal refuge.
2. Only those who with carefulness and purpose navigate successfully the obstacles and temptations of this sin-forsaken and devil-ruled world will achieve heaven hereafter, Rom. 5:12; 2 Cor. 4:4.
3. Hapless masses of humanity who wander through life aimlessly (or even obstinately) will not experience God's heaven, Jer. 6:16.
4. Our Lord Jesus Christ stated publicly in his Sermon on the Mount that comparatively few souls will pursue the narrow, difficult highway to heaven with enough determination to actually arrive within the confines of God's eternal home, Matt. 7:13-14; Prov. 14:12; 16:25.

### **Body:**

- I. **“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat,” Matt. 7:13.**
  - A. “Enter ye in.”
    1. The Greek word for “in” at this place means “through.”
    2. “Enter ye in” is no mere mental assent, but actual activity, howbeit a physical illustration represents necessary spiritual activity to be saved.
  - B. “Strait.”
    1. This word is only used by Jesus, twice in Matt. 7:13-14 and once in Luke 13:24 on different occasions but on the same subject.
    2. Some confusion results over the word “strait”:

<p>The words “straight” and “strait” have very different meanings. The former means “not crooked;” the latter, “pent up, narrow, difficult to be entered.” This is the word used here, and it means that the way to heaven is</p>
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“pent up, narrow, close,” and not obviously entered.  
The way to death is open, broad, and thronged.  
(*Barnes* ’)

3. Strong’s concordance defines this word as “narrow (from obstacles standing close about)” (*Biblesoft*’s).
  4. A Greek Lexicon adds to the definition of “strait” “being narrow or restricted” (Louw and Nida).
  5. Robertson says of “strait” and “narrow” that the way is “compressed,” (*Robertson*’s).
- C. “Gate.”
1. Literally, the Greek for “gate” here means “the leaf or wing of a folding entrance” (*Biblesoft*’s).
  2. Similar to the “gate” here, Jesus referred to himself as “the door” as well as “the way, the truth and the life” between humanity and an eternal home with God, John 10:9; 14:6.
- D. The word “for” here means “because.”
- E. The word “wide” can mean an “open square” (*Biblesoft*’s).
- F. The word “broad” at this place means “spacious” (*Strong*’s) or “roomy” (Bauer, Gingrich and Danker).
- G. The word “way” means “road” (*Biblesoft*’s) or a “natural path” (*Vine*’s).
- H. “Leadeth” means “to take off” (*Biblesoft*’s) or “[l]iterally, ‘leadeth away’” (*Vincent*’s), as to misdirect one’s journey.
- I. The word “to” at this place means “into.”
- J. “Destruction.”
1. “Destruction” means “ruin or loss” (*Biblesoft*’s).
  2. The destruction here is comparable to the “everlasting punishment” of Matt. 25:46.
  3. “Life. Here a contrasting parallel to destruction” (*Wycliffe*).
- K. “Go in” means “enter.”
- L. “Thereat” means “through” and indicates activity, not innocent inactivity, Jam. 4:17; Matt. 12:30.
- II. “Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,” Matt. 7:14.**
- A. “Narrow” means “to crowd” (*Biblesoft*’s) or “to cause someone to suffer trouble or hardship” (Louw and Nida).
  - B. “Few” means “puny,” indicating a small number of something (*Biblesoft*’s).

- C. “Find” is sometimes translated as “get,” “obtain,” “perceive” or “see.”
- D. Some other translations incorporate these word meanings into their text, which contributes to a fuller understanding of what Jesus had to say.

Enter by the **narrow** gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who **enter** by it are many. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is narrow and the way is **hard** that leads to life, and those who find it are few. ESV

Enter by the **narrow** gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> Because narrow *is* the gate and **difficult** *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. NKJV

**III. The Illustration, Meaning and Application.**

- A. Jesus used a multi-faceted illustration with which his audience was well familiar.
  - 1. Jesus referred to two different kinds of roadways.

The Saviour here referred probably to ancient cities. They were surrounded with walls and entered through gates. Some of those, connected with the great avenues to the city, were broad and admitted a throng; others, for more private purposes, were narrow, and few would be seen entering them. So, says Christ, is the path to heaven. It is narrow. It is not “the great highway” that people tread. Few go there. ...The way to death, on the other hand, is broad. Multitudes are in it. It is the great highway in which people go. They fall into it easily and without effort, and go without thought. If they wish to leave that and go by a narrow gate to the city, it would require effort and thought. ...

“Broad is the road that leads to death,  
 And thousands walk together there;  
 But wisdom shows a narrower path,  
 With here and there a traveler.” (*Barnes*)

Our Saviour seems to allude here to the distinction between the public and private ways...The public roads were allowed to be sixteen cubits broad, the private ways only four. The words in the original are very emphatic... (*Clarke's*)

2. Jesus referred to two different kinds of cities and two kinds of gates.

The Master here presents two cities before us. One has a wide gateway opening onto the broad street, and other a narrow gate opening onto a straitened street or alley. The first city is Destruction, the second is Life. (*McGarvey and Pendleton*)

The figure that Jesus uses is that of two final destinations under the form of two cities, "Destruction" and "Life." Each city has a gate by which it is entered: one is wide and the other, narrow. Each city is approached by a road: one broad, the other restricted of passage. Note that, for Jesus, there be only these two possible choices as live options... (*Fowler*)

Nearly every town in Palestine is surrounded by walls and is entered by gates. The principal ones are wide, with double doors, closed with locks and fastened with iron bars. The "strait gates" are in retired corners, are narrow, and are only opened to those who knock. (*Johnson*)

- B. Jesus taught that there are only two possible eternities.

The sum of what our Saviour here saith is this: There are but two ultimate ends of all men, eternal destruction and eternal life. The course that leadeth to destruction is like a broad way that is obvious to all, and many walk in that. That course of life and actions which will bring a man to heaven is strait, unpleasing to flesh and blood, not at all gratifying men's sensitive appetites, and narrow, (the Greek is, afflicted), a way wherein men will meet with many crosses and temptations; and there are but a few will find it. (*Poole*)

Jesus here presents in a very vivid way the two ways—the narrow way and the broad way. These two ways are brought in contrast by a series of words; narrow is opposed to wide; few, to many; and life, to destruction...[The pathway to life is hedged and hindered by many difficulties and troubles. It must be walked with care and watchfulness, lest the way be missed and evil befall us. The way of life is a plain and simple way; but there are obstacles and difficulties...the narrow way is difficult; the others are easy to follow.] (Boles)

C. Application.

1. The Sermon on the Mount and our Lord's teaching about the kingdom of heaven are the backdrop for Matt. 7:13-14.

The leading thought of the whole discourse is the kingdom of heaven and its conditions. Hence, when the Lord says, "Enter ye in," he means into the kingdom of heaven. (Johnson)

2. It is a **sad fact** that few souls, comparatively speaking, will be saved eternally and most souls will be lost eternally, Luke 13:23-25.

Many are called but few accept God's invitation. The majority of humanity will be lost. Therefore, choose well which decision you will make! (Fowler)

The relative number of the saved and the lost is plain from this. They shall be as the few to the many. This eternally recurring contrast between the numbers of the saved and the lost with reference to each succeeding generation should not be discouraging. Wheat does not grow grain all the way to the ground but only in the ear. Although salvation is obtainable and available for all who truly desire it, the plain fact is that the majority in all generations will despise it. And, of wheat, it will be remembered that Christ himself used this grain as a figure of the saved and lost in Matthew 3:12. The relative number of redeemed souls in any generation is not the scale by which God's success may be measured.

God will keep on saving men until the “fullness” of his purpose is achieved (Rom. 11:25). (Coffman)

3. Jesus taught a crucial lesson as applicable today as when he spoke it.

However, Jesus may be only saying, “It is the easiest thing in the world to destroy oneself, and the majority of the world’s people are doing just that.” Many are they that enter in thereby. Here is another clue to the impending difficulties of Christian discipleship. (Cf, 5:10-12). This is a veiled warning that one must be prepared to go against convention, custom and the crowd, and be different even if it means walking alone. Men must not take their moral cue from others, because they too may be lost. Many will be destroyed who did not believe themselves on the broad way...It requires effort, sacrifice and self-surrender to enter into Life. (Cf. Mt. 19:16-22) And few are they that find it. There is certainly no easy optimism in this sad declaration of Jesus. Jesus intends this statistically negative picture as a frank warning that makes His disciples realists who know what to expect in His service. He would have them make their decision wisely. (Fowler)

### **Conclusion:**

1. There have always been only two paths for mortals through life toward eternity, Deut. 30:19; Jer. 21:8.
2. God has always warned mankind to avoid the pathway that leads to death, Psa. 1:1.
3. God has always given good counsel to travel “the way of holiness,” Isa. 35:8; Prov. 4:26-27.
4. However, the pathway that leads to a heavenly home with God is fraught with obstacles and temptations, Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:2-4.

### **Invitation:**

1. Jesus, however, is our Great Shepherd who will lead us to heaven if we will only follow him, Heb. 13:20.
2. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” Mark 16:16.
3. Unfaithful Christians can renew their journey toward heaven through penitence and prayer, Acts 8:11; 1 John 1:9.

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# Another Jesus, Another Spirit & Another Gospel

2 Corinthians 11:2-4

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

## **Introduction:**

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

## **Body:**

- I. **Paul exclaimed that the Corinthians were vulnerable to receiving another Jesus, another spirit and another Gospel.**
  - A. "Preach" means "to be a herald...to proclaim" (*Vine's*).
    1. A different Jesus, a different spirit and a different Gospel is proclaimed whenever men deviate from divine truth (for us, the New Testament).
    2. The danger respecting "another Jesus," "another spirit" and "another Gospel" is not confined to the first century, as we will note more carefully in a few moments.

- B. The “another” relative to “another Jesus” is *allos*, whereas the “another” relative to “another spirit” and “another Gospel” is *heteros*.
1. “Allos...denotes ‘another of the same sort’; heteros...denotes ‘another of a different sort’” (*Vine’s*).
  2. The Corinthians were in danger of receiving another of the same kind Jesus—a counterfeit or substitute Messiah.
  3. Robertson remarks: “...any other ‘Jesus’ is a rival and so wrong. That would deny the identity” (*Robertson’s*).
  4. “The English Revised Version (1885): ‘another’ Jesus, a ‘different’ Spirit. ...’Another’ denies the ‘identity,’ ‘a different’ denies the ‘similarity of nature’” (*Vincent’s*). (See also ASV, NKJV.)
  5. The Corinthians were in danger of receiving another of a different kind spirit and Gospel—counterfeits bearing similarity to the genuine only in name.
- C. Context always determines the sense in which “spirit” is used in Scripture.
1. Barnes was of the opinion that the word “spirit” in this verse refers to the Holy Spirit (*Barnes*’).
  2. However, none of the standard English translations capitalized “spirit” in 2 Cor. 11:4, indicating the translators believed there was no direct reference to the Holy Spirit in the verse.
- This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit... The spirit that is received as a result of obeying the gospel is that frame of mind of the one who knows he is a child of God and can give expression to this knowledge by calling God “Father.”... What, then, was the different spirit which they received when they submitted to false teachers? It was a spirit of faction, jealousy, and deception that characterizes the children of the devil. (*Applebury*)
3. First John 4:6 introduces the concept of “the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error,” which may well be the sense in which the word “spirit” is used in 2 Cor. 11:4.
- D. The word “accepted” here means “to accept, by a deliberate and ready reception of what is offered” (*Vine’s*).

1. The same fervor with which the Thessalonians embraced the true Gospel, the Corinthians were likely to adopt a false gospel, 1 Thess. 2:13.
  2. Paul noted that doctrinal error taught in the first century would “overthrow the faith of some,” 2 Tim. 2:18.
- E. The words “bear with” mean “put up with” (*Biblesoft’s*).
1. Aware that a contrast exists between the real Jesus, the genuine spirit and the certified Gospel, the Corinthians were susceptible to ‘putting up with’ variations from these truths as though it were inconsequential or made little difference.
  2. Paul and other first century inspired writers adamantly affirmed that the slightest variations from divine truth was monumental to the affecting the eternal disposition of souls, or “concerning faith have made shipwreck,” 1 Tim. 1:19; 2 John 9-11.
  3. “Too often we in the church do not look at problems within the church close enough and we sometimes ‘gladly tolerate’ them until it is too late” (Martin).

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

- A. The significance of variations from divine truth were lost on the Corinthians because of the subtlety with which errors were interjected.
1. With “good words and fair speeches,” false teachers deceive the hearts of the “innocent,” Rom. 16:17-18 ASV, “naïve people” NIV or the “unsuspecting” NASV.
  2. “Deceitful workers” represent themselves to be what they are not, 2 Cor. 11:13-15.
  3. Subtly, false teachers “delude...with persuasiveness of speech,” Col. 2:4 ASV.
  4. “False prophets” “exploit...with deceptive words,” 2 Pet. 2:3 NKJV.
  5. False teachers “speak great swelling words of emptiness,” 2 Pet. 2:18 NKJV or “great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage,” Jude 16 NKJV.

6. The church today is no less susceptible to corruption from true Christianity through subtle means (from without and within the church).
- B. Espoused (a bride) to Christ, the church at Corinth was at risk of spiritual adultery, 2 Cor. 11:2.
1. The imagery of God’s people being married to him appears throughout the Old Testament, Isa. 54:5; 62:4-5; Hos. 2:19-20.
  2. God’s Old Testament people had often committed spiritual adultery, Ezek. 16:15-16.
  3. The New Testament, likewise, uses the imagery of God’s people being married to God, Matt. 9:15; Rom. 7:4; Rev. 21:9.
  4. So, the church in any age, including today, can be as an adulterous wife to our Lord.
- C. Some **ancient examples** strengthen our understanding of the potential today for embracing a “another Jesus,” “another spirit” and “another gospel.”
1. “Gnosticism...denied the humanity of Christ, even to the extent of denying the reality of His human body” (*New Unger’s*); see Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 6:20-21 ASV, NKJV; 1 John 2:22-23; **2 John 7**.
  2. Another early error regarding Jesus Christ was Ebionism, which acknowledged the humanity of Jesus Christ but denied his divinity.

Ebionism, or the doctrine of the Ebionites, a Jewish sect that existed even in the time of the apostles. This error arose from mistaken Jewish preconceptions concerning the Messiah and consisted in the denial of the divine nature of Christ. (*New Unger’s*)

3. One characteristic of Ebionism appears prominently today in the form of the false doctrine of premillennialism, Zech. 6:13; Heb. 7:12-14; 8:4.

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

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

1. The Mormon Church with its Book of Mormon (supposedly “another testament of Jesus Christ”) is a good example of preaching “another gospel”: “...Mormons have ‘another Jesus’ (2 Cor. 11:4), and are not familiar with the Bible’s message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even though they use his name all the time” (Hearn).
2. Ecumenical, across denominational lines, movements, such as the Promise Keepers, Billy Graham crusades, etc. give Jesus Christ a makeover before presenting him to their audiences.

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

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

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

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

This shows that men may acknowledge many of the leading truths of the Christian religion, yet so pervert the teachings as to make it another gospel. ... Many now do as these false teachers did—acknowledge Jesus and the Spirit, and the gospel from God, yet change and pervert the teaching. They are placed by Paul as he did

these early teachers, in company with the serpent in Eden deceiving Eve. (Lipscomb)

### **Conclusion:**

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

### **Invitation:**

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

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# Necessity of Faith and Importance of Obedience

Numbers 20:7-12

**Thesis:** To demonstrate from Scripture that faith and obedience are inseparable aspects of Christianity.

## **Introduction:**

1. Who could blame Moses for being distraught as he attempted to lead rebellious Israel through the wilderness of Sinai toward Canaan, Num. 20:10?
  - a. Moses didn't want the job and tried to avoid the mission on which God sent him, Exod. 3-4.
  - b. Israel fought the lead of God through Moses all along the way, Exod. 15:23-25 (waters of Marah); Exod. 16:2-3 (complained for food); Exod. 17:2-7 (complained of thirst at Rephidim); Exod. 32 (golden calf); Num. 14:1-5 (murmuring over report of the 10 spies); Num. 16:1-40 (rebellion of Korah and 250 other princes); Num. 16:41-50 (murmuring because former complainers died).
  - c. Israel was murmuring against Moses and Aaron once more in Num. 20:1-13.
2. God, though, did not chastise Moses for exhibiting frustration, but God punished him for disobeying him, Num. 20:7-12; Psalm 106:32-33.

The command (Num 20:8) was "Speak ye unto the rock." The act of smiting, and especially with two strokes, indicates violent irritation on the part of Moses; as does also his unseemly mode of addressing the people: "Hear now, ye rebels." The form too of the question, "must we, etc.," directs the people not, as ought to have been the case, to God as their deliverer, but to Moses and Aaron personally. In fact the faithful servant of God, worn out by the reiterated perversities of the people, breaks down; and in the actual discharge of his duty as God's representative before Israel, acts

unworthily of the great function entrusted to him. Thus, Moses did not “sanctify God in the eyes of the children of Israel.” Aaron might have checked the intemperate words and acts of Moses, and did not. Hence, God punishes both by withdrawing them from their work for Him, and handing over its accomplishment to another. (*Barnes*)

- a. Aaron and Moses experienced “momentary wavering” (*Keil & Delitzsch*).

Instead of speaking to the rock with the rod of God in his hand, as God directed him, he spoke to the congregation, and in...inconsiderate words...In the ill-will expressed in these words the weakness of faith was manifested, by which the faithful servant of God, worn out with the numerous temptations, allowed himself to be overcome, so that he stumbled, and did not sanctify the Lord before the eyes of the people, as he ought to have done. Aaron also wavered along with Moses, inasmuch as he did nothing to prevent Moses' fall. But their sin became a grievous one, from the fact that they acted unworthily of their office. God punished them, therefore, by withdrawing their office from them before they had finished the work entrusted to them. They were not to conduct the congregation into the promised land, and therefore were not to enter in themselves (cf. Num 27:12-13; Deut 32:48 ff.). (*Keil & Delitzsch*).

- b. “...they were doomed not to cross the Jordan or to enter the land of promise” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*); see also Num. 20:22-29 (Aaron) and Deut. 34:1-6.
- c. Imagine reluctantly taking a job you did not want (at the age of 80), being verbally abused constantly by the people you're leading, putting up with the inconveniences of wandering in a desert wilderness for 40 years, and then upon arriving at an Eden-like land not allowed to enter. That's the retirement years of the man we know as Moses.

**Body:**

**I. The relationship between faith and obedience is so close that the two concepts cannot be separated within Christianity.**

- A. Romans 11:30-32 illustrates the essential sameness of faith

and obedience.

- B. The Greek words for “unbelief” and “not believed” in these three verses are translated as “unbelief” (Rom. 11:30, 32; Heb. 4:6, 11) and “disobedience” (Eph. 2:2; 5:6; Col. 3:6), “believeth not” (John 3:36; Acts 17:5; 19:9; Heb. 3:18; 11:31), “unbelieving” (Acts 14:2), “not obey” (Rom. 2:8; 1 Pet. 3:1; 4:17) and “disobedient” (Rom. 10:21; 1 Pet. 2:7-8; 3:20).
- C. That is 13 times ‘unbelief’ and 10 times ‘disobedient’ of 23 occurrences in the Greek New Testament.
- D. The ASV translates Romans 11:30-32 with the word “disobedience” in each instance the KJV in this passage uses the word “unbelief” or “not believed.”

## **II. Obedience is a key element of God-given religion, including Christianity.**

- A. Jesus saves the obedient, Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 6:17; 2 Cor. 10:5.
- B. Jesus will punish the disobedient upon his Second Coming, 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 1 Pet. 4:17.
- C. The result of the proper kind of love for God is obedience, John 14:15 ASV, 21.
- D. Obedience (works) is the natural result of the right kind of faith, Jam. 2:14-26.
- E. God rebuked Moses and Aaron in Num. 20:12 for not sanctifying God before the people by obeying him, cf. 1 Pet. 3:15.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Noting the near sameness of faith and obedience, it is no wonder then that God rebuked Moses and Aaron for their unbelief when they disobeyed God, Heb. 3:16-19.
2. The incident in Num. 20:1-13 illustrates the seriousness of disobeying God even in matters that through human judgment we might view as insignificant.
3. Lev. 10:1-2 is another example of what might appear to us as a little thing (of disobedience) that had serious consequences.

### **Invitation:**

1. Jesus remarked during his ministry that he is the Lord of those who obey him, Luke 6:46.
2. Jesus Christ is not your Lord if you have not obeyed Jesus, Mark 16:16.
3. Jesus Christ is not your Lord if after being baptized for the

remission of your sins you are not faithfully worshipping God, practicing godly living and serving God as he has directed, 1 John 1:9.

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# No Knowledge Between Good and Evil

## Deuteronomy 1:39

**Thesis:** To definitively demonstrate through Scripture that babies and young children are not guilty of sin.

### **Introduction:**

1. First, Scripture teaches that a soul is not guilty for the sin of his forefathers (or anyone else, e.g. Adam and Eve), Ezek. 18:20.
2. Scripture also teaches that a soul makes his debut in this life innocent of sin, Ezek. 28:15.
3. Further, Scripture teaches that a soul initially knows a state of innocence, during which he is unable to discern between right and wrong, Deut. 1:39.
4. When, however, does a soul pass from a state of innocence to accountability to God for knowing the difference between right and wrong (becoming guilty of sin)?
5. Sin, then, occurs when one violates the law of God, 1 John 3:4.

### **Body:**

- I. **First, we direct our attention to the affirmation that babies and young children are not guilty of sin.**
  - A. Does Scripture teach either explicitly or implicitly that such an assertion is true?
    1. One commentator observes that the Bible addresses this subject but **very little**.

*Infant salvation.* The belief that those below an “age of accountability” can be (or are) recipients of the grace of God for salvation; a difficult doctrine, because little is said about it in the Bible. (Karleen)

2. Further, especially Catholic doctrine teaches that everyone is born into this world guilty of the sin of Adam and Eve, i.e. “Original Sin.”
3. Still further, the doctrine of Calvinism, which many contemporary denominations embrace in their creeds, teaches Total Hereditary Depravity, i.e. the original sin

of Adam and Eve passes to all their descendants at birth (essentially the same as the Catholic doctrine of “Original Sin”).

- B. However, the Bible clearly teaches that sin is not inherited (though the consequences of sins may affect others, including one’s descendants, 1 Cor. 15:21).
1. Souls are only responsible for their own sins, not the sins of others such as fathers or children, Ezek. 18:4, 20; Deut. 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chron. 25:4; Jer. 31:30.
  2. Through Adam and Eve sinning, sin entered into the world, Rom. 5:12.
  3. All the descendants of Adam and Eve have sinned (excepting Jesus Christ), Rom. 3:23; Heb. 4:15.
- C. The Bible clearly teaches that souls debut on planet earth sinless.
1. God put a sinless soul into the body of each person born, Ezek. 28:15.
  2. Since God gives each person his or her soul, one could only conclude that a Holy God puts sinless souls in mankind, Ecc. 12:7; Isa. 42:5; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9.
  3. Only afterward, at some point, do souls commit sin, Ecc. 7:29 NKJV.
- D. There is a time in the life of a child when God does not impute sin to him or her.
1. There is a time “before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good,” Isa. 7:16.
  2. “Little ones” have “no knowledge between good and evil,” and in the context of Deut. 1:39 were permitted to enter Canaan because God did not hold them guilty of sin when their parents rebelled against God, Num. 14:3, 26-38.

Since the children had not been partakers of the sinful outbreak, they were spared to obtain the privilege which their unbelieving parents had forfeited.  
(*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*)

- E. Children have the innocence before God that each adult must acquire for entrance into the kingdom of God.
1. Converts to Christianity must “become as little children,” Matt. 18:3.

2. Jesus Christ compared the citizens of the kingdom of heaven to children, Matt. 19:4.

## II. When does a child pass from the state of innocence or achieve the age of accountability?

- A. There is no certain age at which every person becomes self-aware to the point of recognizing that he is responsible for sins before God.
  1. The age of accountability, then, varies from person to person.

When does one reach, as some have called it, “the age of accountability”? The Bible does not give an age of accountability. Some have argued that one is accountable at the age of twelve. Others have chosen different ages, such as eighteen, or even twenty-one. What should be discussed is when does one reach the state of maturity that he is accountable to God for his actions. As one may mature earlier than another, so he becomes accountable earlier than the other. One becomes accountable when he is just that—accountable. The one who does not have the maturity or ability to understand the nature of sin and the need for forgiveness has yet to reach this state. Third, the one mentally deficient to the point he is mentally, intellectually, and/or emotionally like a little child is not a sinner. The reasons for such a person’s nonaccountability are the same as for the baby and child. Could such a man obey the Gospel? Not really, for he does not have the ability to do so. He is not accountable, and will not be condemned even though physically he appears to be a mature adult. (Liddell 988-989)

2. Some people never arrive at an age of accountability due to mental defect.
  3. Others who once were accountable to God may no longer have a sound mind, and hence are no longer accountable persons, which if they did not become faithful Christians in the interim while they were accountable have no more hope than those who died not making preparation to meet God in Judgment.
- B. The “little ones” and “children” of Deut. 1:39 who were not

held accountable for the rebellion which kept their parents out of Canaan were aged up to 19-years-old.

1. First, the definition for “little ones” is:

**Weaker One, Little One** Basically this word signifies those members of a nomadic tribe who are not able to march or who can only march to a limited extent. The word implies the “weaker ones.” (*Vine’s*)

2. Only persons 20-years-old and upward who rebelled among the Israelites of the Exodus were forbidden to enter Canaan, Num. 14:29, 31.

3. These were “all the generation of the men of war,” Num. 26:2; Deut. 2:14.

4. At least in that biblical incident, God exempted as accountable souls everyone under the age of 20-year-olds.

C. A person has to be consciously able to make a choice to obey or disobey God, irrespective of whether one has been acquainted with the pure Gospel of Christ.

1. Since sin is the violation of God’s Law (for us the Gospel), one must have the mental capacity or development to transgress God’s Law, 1 John 3:4.

2. However, infants and young children do not have the mental development to transgress the Gospel.

3. Likewise, to be accountable for sin one must have sufficient mental capacity or development to purposefully respond to the positive commands of the Gospel, i.e. hear, believe, repent, confess Jesus as Christ and submit to immersion for the remission of sins.

Also, there are those in denominationalism who practice infant baptism. But the Scriptures teach us that the one to be baptized must believe (Acts 8:37; 8:12; Mark 16:16). He must repent of his sins (Acts 2:38). He must confess Christ (Acts 8:37). Thus, baptism is for those who have reached the age of accountability. (Hester 283)

All people who have reached the age of accountability are the “whom-all persons that are able to *hear*, be

*taught, and understand* the Doctrine of Christ (John 6:44-45)! (Melson 305-306)

### **III. One has greater responsibility spiritually when he or she arrives at an age of accountability.**

- A. Becoming a child of God after realizing one's accountability to God for his or her sin is the most important decision a soul can make.
1. Even other important decisions in life are relatively insignificant compared to the decision to obey the Gospel, 1 Pet. 4:17.

We call upon our young people who have reached the "age of accountability" to make the most important commitment they will ever make even though they are not ready to make earthshaking decisions such as getting married, terminating schooling, etc. I have baptized many twelve year olds, but never have I performed a wedding ceremony for such a one, nor will I. Evidently, we are making a clear distinction in the need for understanding "becoming a Christian" and for understanding "getting married" or other such decisions. Becoming a Christian, or making THE commitment if you please, is to be made when one feels he is responsible to God and is therefore lost in sin. Some get to that point earlier than others. (Dale 100)

2. However, whenever one has the presence of mind that he or she can consciously choose between good and evil, that one is accountable to God for sins.

Every person who has reached the "age of accountability" and is mentally developed has the choice of doing right and/or of doing wrong. (Hicks 324)

### **Conclusion:**

1. It is impossible for babies and young children to die in sin forasmuch as they are neither capable of choosing to disobey God's Law (for us the Gospel) nor are they able to obey the Gospel, 1 John 3:4; Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

**Baptists, Free-Will** All who die short of the age of accountability are rendered sure of eternal life. (*McClintock and Strong*)

Babies will be in heaven. Millions of precious little ones who died before reaching the age of accountability will be in glory forever. Our Lord said of children, “*of such is the kingdom of heaven*” (Mat. 18:1-4). David spoke of going to heaven to be with his infant child (2 Sam. 12:15-23). (Sain 1133)

2. Similarly, as Adam and Eve were created sinless, but afterward became guilty of sin, every soul enters the world sinless and only later becomes guilty of sin, Gen. 1:26-27, 31.

The same pattern evident in the fall of Adam and Eve into sin is the same pattern that individuals follow when they reach the age of accountability and fall into sin. (Winton 461)

God made man upright. When God created man and placed him in the garden of Eden, he was in a state of innocence until the day that he transgressed God’s law (I John 3:4). Likewise, when a child comes into this world, it is in a state of innocence until it reaches the age of accountability and transgresses God’s law. The Bible does not teach the idea of original sin, or total hereditary depravity. This is one of those “inventions” sought out by man. Little children do not inherit sin from their parents. The Calvinist teaching of original sin, or total depravity, is false. (Vick 184)

3. “When our children reach the age of accountability, they are just as responsible as anyone else before God for their actions” (Patterson).
4. Every person who has the ability to know the difference between good and evil is accountable to God for his or her sins.

According to plain Bible teaching, every person is both free and responsible from the time of his coming to the age of accountability (knowing good and evil, Deut. 1:39) until the time of his death (except for times he may be of unsound mind). (Warren 1)

5. Neither parents nor children will cease to fret over the age of accountability, but both parents and children need to urgently contemplate that obeying the Gospel is the most important decision of one's life, i.e. more important than selecting a marriage partner, selection of a college or one's lifelong occupation.

**Invitation:**

1. God has always desired that mankind turn from sin to righteousness, and he provided the sinless Christ as a sacrifice for our sins, Ezek. 18:21; 1 Pet. 2:24.
2. Salvation from sin is available to those who will accept it on God's terms, John 3:16; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians can also obtain salvation from sin in their lives through Jesus Christ, 1 John 1:7, 9.

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# Gluttony

## Titus 1:12-13 ASV, NKJV

**Thesis:** To provide a biblical definition of gluttony and evaluate its application to Christianity today.

### **Introduction:**

1. Gluttony is a biblical subject appearing in both testaments of the Bible.
2. Though information on this topic from both testaments combined is minimal, gluttony is nevertheless a part of preaching the whole counsel of God, Acts 20:27.
3. This lesson, then, is intended to be informational.

### **Body:**

#### **I. Gluttony is defined by the words used to represent it.**

- A. Gluttony is sometimes represented in the New Testament by the Greek word, *gaster*.
  1. *Gaster* means “stomach” and is also translated as “belly,” “with child” or “womb” (*Biblesoft’s*).
  2. In Titus 1:12, *gaster* refers to gluttony, i.e. “bellies” KJV, “gluttons” ASV and NKJV.
  3. Various commentators on Titus 1:12 write:

“They are so given to gluttony that they are mere ‘bellies.’ Compare Phil 3:19. *Gaster* (NT:1064), elsewhere in the New Testament always in connection with childbearing” (*Vincent’s*).

“...they were a race of gluttons, a people whose only concern was the stomach; compare Phil 3:19” (*Barnes’*).

“They themselves are called “bellies,” for that is the member for which they live (Rom 16:18; Phil 3:19)” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*).

- B. Gluttony is sometimes represented in the New Testament by the Greek word, *koilia*.
  1. *Koilia* can mean “to be given up to the pleasures of the

- palate, to gluttony” (*Enhanced Strong’s*).
- 2. Phil. 3:19 (“whose God is their belly”) and Rom. 16:18 (“serve...their own belly”) are such uses of *koilia*.
- 3. However, *koilia* in other contexts means “belly” or “womb,” much like the Greek word *gaster* is used.
- C. Gluttony is sometimes represented in the New Testament by the word, *phagos*.
  - 1. *Phagos* means “a glutton.”
  - 2. *Phagos* appears twice, in Matt. 11:19 and Luke 7:34, in false accusations made against Jesus.
- D. Uniformly in the New Testament, gluttony is represented as a sinful condition that Christians especially ought to avoid.

**II. Gluttony is defined in part by the other activities associated with it.**

- A. The Old Testament portrays gluttony as a sin.
  - 1. The Old Testament pictures gluttony as a serious enough affront to God and to man to be worthy of death, Deut. 21:20-21.
  - 2. The Old Testament states that gluttony (accompanied with drunkenness) leads to “poverty,” “drowsiness” and “rags,” Prov. 23:21; Num. 11:31-34.
- B. The New Testament includes gluttony in its catalog of sins, as already noted, Titus 1:12; Phil. 3:19.
- C. Gluttony is a companion to other sins, which together paint a picture of an ungodly lifestyle.
  - 1. Gluttony is part of a careless lifestyle punctuated with sin, Luke 12:19, i.e. “...eat, drink and be merry.”
  - 2. Gluttony is often associated with drunkenness, too, Luke 12:45, i.e. “...to eat and drink, and to be drunken.” (See also Isa. 22:13.)

**III. Gluttony posed a real threat to Christians in the first century.**

- A. The commonality of the sin of gluttony in the first century was serious enough for the apostle Paul to warn a younger preacher about it, Titus 1:12.

...a lazy, idle people, that had much more inclination to eat and drink than they had to work in any honest labour. From all this the apostle would infer, that Titus had the more need be watchful in his place, and faithful in the discharge of his office, being amongst such a people. (Poole)

- B. The same reason for which Paul warned Titus about gluttony is reason enough for us to be careful today respecting the lifestyle of which gluttony is a part.
1. Whatever the topic, even Christians become accustomed to the norm of society.
  2. Society and even Christians arrive at a point where they cannot blush at the worst evil, Jer. 6:15; 8:12.

**Conclusion:**

1. The English dictionary says of “gluttony” that it is “1 : excess in eating or drinking; 2 : greedy or excessive indulgence” (*Merriam*).
2. “Gluttony is more than overeating. In its association with drunkenness (Prov 23:21; Deut 21:20), it describes a life given to excess” (*Nelson’s*).
3. Of the inhabitants of Crete commentators note:

No attempt was made to curb any selfish, sensual or vengeful desire. The expression “lumpish greedy-guts” is used by Simpson to describe the third quality of such persons. When no attempt is made to control the appetites of the body, such a person will carry around an advertisement of his lack of self-control. It will be a large stomach! (DeWelt 151)

...a person who habitually eats excessively...A glutton is often spoken of idiomatically, for example, ‘a large belly’ or ‘a person who is only a stomach’ or ‘a professional eater.’ (Louw and Nida)

4. (Admittedly, a large stomach does not always signal an excessive eater, e.g. pregnancy, medical condition.)
5. One commentator denotes the tendency of preachers especially to need Paul’s instruction, perhaps one reason the topic is little discussed from the pulpit.

The writer cannot help but add the following, addressed to himself and his associates in the ministry; “Brethren, let us curb our appetite for food in order that we may make a pleasing appearance in the pulpit.” (Wuest)

6. Christians should practice moderation in all things and be given to no excesses, Phil. 4:5.

**Invitation:**

1. May we always be interested in the whole counsel of God,

- irrespective of what any part of it may be.
2. Unfortunately, so many people are decidedly disinterested in the part of the whole counsel of God that deals with salvation, Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Acts 17:30; 8:37; 2:38; Rev. 2:10.
  3. The whole counsel of God also includes information on how erring Christians can be forgiven of their sins, Acts 8:22.

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# I Come in the Name of the Lord

1 Samuel 17:45

**Thesis:** To emphasize that the servant of God does what he does by the authority of God, and hence, the servant of the Lord comes with the power of God.

## **Introduction:**

1. The expression “in the name of the Lord” appears 109 times in the *King James Version* of the Bible.
  - a. The expression “in the name of the Lord” appears in both testaments of the Bible.
  - b. However, one must examine the respective contexts in which the expression “in the name of the Lord” appears to ascertain its application in various passages of Scripture.
2. The context in which the expression “in the name of the Lord” appears colors its specific application in various Scripture passages.
  - a. “In the name of the Lord” may refer to a servant of God enabled with the power of God, 1 Sam. 17:45.
  - b. “In the name of the Lord” may refer to the authority of God with which a servant of God executes a divine assignment, Col. 3:17.
  - c. “In the name of the Lord” may refer especially to a prophet or a preacher in the employ of God who has a divinely sent message to deliver to his fellow man, Jer. 26:9, 16, 20; Jam. 5:10.
3. In a sense, I am a prophet of God (a minister of the Gospel, if you will) who comes to you “in the name of the Lord” (i.e. by his authority) with a message of God for my fellow man.
  - a. Every faithful preacher of the true Gospel ought to be received in that way, but sometimes auditors of the Word of God do not want to hear it, Jer. 11:21.
  - b. However, the apostle Paul indicated that even in his day, it was the exception to the rule that the auditors of the Gospel readily acknowledged the Gospel as the Word of God, 1 Thess. 2:13.

- c. Evidently, even God's people sometimes were reluctant to acknowledge God's preachers as bona fide messengers of God, Jer. 44:16.

### **Body:**

#### **I. Those who despise God's preacher who comes in the name of the Lord will suffer divine punishment.**

- A. God has always selected spokesmen for his Holy Word, 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1.
  1. Moses is a case of God's selection of a man who did not want the job, Exod. 3-4.
  2. Jeremiah is a case of a preacher (prophet) of God who tried to refrain from heralding God's message, Jer. 20:9.
  3. God has selected preachers to make the Gospel known, Rom. 10:14-15; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-12.
- B. God has reacted harshly toward those who challenged his spokesmen, Num. 16.
  1. The motivation for challenging God's servants was envy or jealousy, not serving God or attending to the will of God, Psa. 106:16-18.
  2. Stephen accused his countrymen of rejecting the preaching servants of God even as had their forefathers rejected God's messengers and murdered them, Acts 7:51-52.
  3. There has always been trouble among God's people respecting the proclamation of God's Word and leadership, 3 John 9-10.

#### **II. Especially hearkening to preacher's who come in the name of the Lord can lead to the salvation of souls.**

- A. God's spokesmen throughout the ages have been required to tell the truth "in the name of the Lord," 1 Kings 22:16.
  1. However, sometimes telling God's truth makes enemies even among Christians, Acts 9:29; Gal. 4:16.
  2. This truth from God must be heralded with urgency (ASV) "whether it be welcome or not" (*Vincent's*), 2 Tim. 4:2.
- B. The overall purpose of God's spokesmen heralding a message from God is the salvation of souls, Rom. 10:13.
  1. Hence, baptism is commanded "in the name of the Lord," Acts 10:48; 19:5; 22:16.

2. Heeding the message of God through his preachers changes vile humanity from lost sinners to saved saints, 1 Cor. 6:11.

**Conclusion:**

1. A faithful preacher of God's Word is due the respect that his role as a servant of God deserves.
2. When a faithful preacher heralds the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he comes in the name of the Lord, or by the authority of the Lord.
3. Those who hear the Gospel can hearken to it and be rewarded, or they can reject it and be punished in Judgment.

**Invitation:**

1. The chief role of faithful preachers who come in the name of the Lord is to bring the good news of salvation to humanity, Rom. 10:13-18.
2. Believers need to repent and be baptized, Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians need to repent and pray, Acts 8:22.

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*Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament*. CD-ROM. Seattle: Biblesoft, 1997.

# Lost Books of the Bible

## 2 Kings 22:8

**Thesis:** To emphasize that mankind has the written revelation from God that he wants practiced.

### **Introduction:**

1. It is almost unbelievable, but the Old Testament Jews lost “the book of the law in the house of the Lord,” 2 Kings 22:8.
  - a. Amazingly, the Jews had become so lapsed in their religion and distanced from God that they did not even realize that “the book of the law” was missing.
  - b. Still mind boggling, it was the high priest who accidentally “found the book of the law” when especially the high priest should have been conducting the rites of Judaism in accordance with “the book of the law.”
  - c. Little surprise, “the book of the law” was found exactly where the Jews had left it (and forgot about it) “in the house of the Lord.”
2. In our time, some critics of the Bible claim that though we have the Bible, some books of the Bible have been omitted.
  - a. William Hone wrote a book entitled, “Lost Books of the Bible,” and others have written similar volumes.
  - b. Hone and others propose to add to the Bible ancient writings that were contemporary with or nearly contemporary with Bible books.
  - c. These are generally called the Apocrypha and those that are falsely ascribed to inspired prophets or apostles are called Pseudepigrapha.
3. In truth, there are not any “lost books of the Bible.”
  - a. It is true that God did not cause to have preserved every letter written by an inspired writer, 1 Cor. 5:9; Col. 4:16.
  - b. Further, the Bible sometimes refers to other writings that may or may not have been written by inspired persons, Josh. 10:13; Acts 17:28.
  - c. However, God has caused to be preserved everything that he wants mankind to have, 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3.
4. There is a sense in which, though, that the books of the Bible are

essentially lost today.

- a. Unfortunately, mankind today often looks at the Bible as a gigantic, mystic puzzle containing insights into UFO's or harboring some kind of *code language*.
- b. The bare teaching of the Bible is increasingly ignored by contemporary mankind.

### **Body:**

#### **I. The real lost books of the Bible are the 66 books from Genesis to Revelation.**

- A. The Bible is comprised of two testaments, Matt. 26:28; 2 Cor. 3:6, 14.
- B. The **Old Testament** is comprised of a library of 39 books that fall into various classifications.
  1. **Books of Law (5):** Gen.—Deut.
  2. **History (12):** Josh.—Esther.
  3. **Poetry (5):** Job—Song of Solomon.
  4. **Prophecy (17):** Isa.—Mal.
- C. The **New Testament** is comprised of a library of 27 books that fall into various classifications.
  1. **History (5):** Matt.—Acts.
  2. **Epistles or letters (21):** Rom.—Jude.
  3. **Prophecy (1):** Rev.

#### **II. Not so-called lost books of the Bible, but the Holy Bible of God will determine where each person spends eternity.**

- A. Books of the Bible are essentially lost when the doctrine within them is ignored or countermanded.
  1. Mankind does his own thing regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage, despite what the New Testament teaches about the subject, adultery, fornication, polygamy two or more or one at a time, Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11.
  2. Mankind proposes to decide of itself whether homosexuality is an alternate lifestyle or a sin, 1 Cor.6:9-10 NKJV.
  3. Mankind has chosen to erect its own churches in competition with the one church for which Jesus died and over which he is the head, Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28.
  4. Mankind has taken the ungodly prerogative of worshipping God according to his own whims instead of according to New Testament instruction, Matt. 15:9,

13; Col. 2:23; 3:16-17.

5. Mankind has opted for a plan of salvation of his own devising, instead of what God put in the New Testament, Mark 16:16.
- B. Though mankind may pretend that the books of the Bible are lost, the Word of God will judge each soul and discern his eternal home respectively.
1. There was a time when man so distanced himself from God through wickedness and violence that God destroyed humanity, except for eight souls, Gen. 6-8; 1 Pet. 3:20.
  2. We will be judged by the words of Jesus, John 12:48.
  3. Before the Judgment throne of our Lord, we will be judged by the law of God under which we live, the New Testament, Rev. 20:12-15.

**Conclusion:**

1. The result of so wide a disregard for the Bible is a society that is becoming more and more wicked and distanced from God.
2. Modern man is doing the same thing that the Old Testament Jews did when they lost “the book of the law.”
3. The only hope for our nation, its people and all of us is if we like the ancients can find the book of the law of the Lord, and apply it to our lives.

**Invitation:**

1. Is the Bible important to us, or is its library of books lost on us?
2. We are lost if God’s Word, the Bible, is lost to us, 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
3. When Jesus gave the proverbial keys of the kingdom to the apostle Peter, our Lord charged Peter with the responsibility of telling souls how to become Christians and Christians how to be forgiven when they commit sins, Acts 2:38; 8:22.

# A Roaring Lion

## 1 Peter 5:8

**Thesis:** To impress upon Christians the vulnerability to Satan when one does not avail himself of protection afforded through the combined defenses of other Christians.

### **Introduction:**

1. The apostle Peter was inspired to write 1 Pet. 5:8.
  - a. The word “sober” means “to be free from the influence of intoxicants” (*Vine’s*).
  - b. To be “vigilant” is “to keep awake, i.e. watch” (*Biblesoft’s*).
  - c. “Adversary” means “an opponent (in a lawsuit)” (*Biblesoft’s*) and is ascribed to Satan, cf. 1 John 2:1.
  - d. The definite article (“the”) before the word “adversary” in the Greek indicates a particular adversary, here identified further (*Vincent’s*).
  - e. The word “devil” means “an accuser, a slanderer” (*Vine’s*).
  - f. Satan “is seeking” or plotting against one’s life (*Biblesoft’s*).
  - g. Some translations translate “walketh about” as “prowls.”
  - h. The word “devour” means “gulp entire” (*Biblesoft’s*).
2. Jesus said that Satan is a murderer and a liar, John 8:44.
  - a. The devil has children, according to the apostle John, 1 John 3:10.
  - b. Satan also masquerades as “an angel of light” and his followers represent themselves as “ministers of righteousness,” 2 Cor. 11:14-15.

### **Body:**

- I. **Satan, like a lion, attacks the young and defenseless.**
  - A. Satan attacks the babe in Christ who is not sufficiently armed with the knowledge of God’s Word.
    1. Those who exercise themselves in the Word of God can more easily discern the difference between good and evil, Heb. 5:12-14.
    2. Only a steady diet of God’s Word can transform a baby in Christ into a full-grown Christian, 1 Pet. 2:2; Eph. 4:13-14.
  - B. Satan attacks those who don’t know any better.

1. The “naïve” (NIV) or “unsuspecting” (NAS) are susceptible to being misled, Rom. 16:18.
  2. The Old Testament also contrasts the “prudent” saint with the “naïve” saint, Prov. 14:15; 22:3 NAS.
  3. Again, only the Word of God can satisfactorily educate the non-discerning or “simple” person, Psa. 19:7.
- C. Being or remaining young or defenseless Christians is just begging for Satan like a lion to gobble us up, Isa. 28:9.

## **II. Satan, like a lion, attacks the weak or sickly.**

- A. Weak Christians are those whose consciences are not sufficiently educated.
1. The apostle Paul cautioned strong Christians to be careful not to unnecessarily offend the weak consciences of their brethren, Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8.
  2. Weak Christians do not have a right to remain weak or make demands on stronger Christians.
- B. Paul also described as weak and sickly Christians those who do not worship God properly (especially regarding the Lord’s Supper), 1 Cor. 11:30.
1. Paul further instructed Christians to “support” or care for the “weak” (*Biblesoft’s*), Rom. 15:1.
  2. Of course, weak and sickly Christians have a responsibility to participate in their own recuperation, Gal. 6:1-2, 5.
- C. Being or remaining weak or sickly Christians is just begging for Satan like a lion to gobble us up, Isa. 35:3.

## **III. Satan, like a lion, attacks those alone or by themselves.**

- A. Christians are not supposed to be alone, but they are to worship and study together.
1. The early church met as often as they could to worship and study, Acts 2:42.
  2. God requires Christians to worship together at least on each Lord’s Day, Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
- B. Christians are not supposed to be alone, but they are to fellowship together.
1. The early church met together for Christian fellowship as often as they could (sometimes daily), Acts 2:46.
  2. Sometimes that fellowship manifests itself in suffering together, Phil. 3:10.
  3. Christian fellowship includes cooperation in taking the

- Gospel to the world, Phil. 1:5.
4. Fellowship may involve being prisoners together, Col. 4:10; Philemon 23.
  5. Fellowship includes working together for the Lord, 1 Thess. 3:2; Philemon 1.
  6. Importantly, Christians are “fellowheirs,” Eph. 3:6.
- C. Being alone as Christians is just begging for Satan like a lion to gobble us up, Ecc. 4:9-12.

**Conclusion:**

1. The apostle Paul forewarned the Ephesian Christians not to “give place to the devil,” Eph. 4:27.
2. Further, Paul instructed the Christians at Ephesus to put on the Christian armor to “be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,” Eph. 6:11.
3. James advised that when we resist the devil he will flee from us, Jam. 4:7.

**Invitation:**

1. One is not resisting the devil so that he will flee as long as one has not obeyed the Gospel to become a Christian, Acts 2:38.
2. One is not resisting the devil so that he will flee as long as one gives the devil a place in his or her life, 1 John 1:9.

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# Come Meet Jesus as the Creator

John 1:1-3

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

## **Introduction:**

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

## **Body:**

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

- A. The Godhead is comprised of three persons.
  1. Commonly, this Bible doctrine is known as the Trinity or the Triune God; the Trinity deserves a biblical study dedicated to it, though herein we only have time to introduce it.
  2. Three persons of the one Godhead appear in several New Testament passages, Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 1:30-35; 3:21-22; 24:49; John 14:16-17, 25-26; Acts 2:32-33; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 5:18-20; 1 Thess. 1:2-5; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Titus 3:4-6; 2 Tim. 1:3, 13-14; Heb. 2:3-4; 6:4-6; 10:29-31; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 John 5:4-6; Jude 20-21.
  3. Old Testament passages also acknowledge the three divine persons in one Godhead, Isa. 42:1; 61:1-2; Luke 4:18; Heb. 1:10; Psa. 102:25-27.
  4. Otherwise, Scripture refers to the three persons in one God as the Godhead, Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9.
  5. We may find it difficult to understand, but the Father and the Son (Jesus Christ) are one in that Godhead, John 10:30.

- B. The collective cooperation of the divine persons in the one Godhead created everything that is.
1. Plural pronouns in Scripture evidence the plurality of divine persons responsible for creation, Gen. 1:26; cf. Gen. 3:22; 11:7.
  2. The plural noun for God in Scripture indicates the plurality of divine persons responsible for creation, Gen. 1:26 *Elohim*.

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

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

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

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

- A. Many New Testament passages frankly attribute creation to Jesus Christ.
1. Jesus Christ was co-eternal with God the Father, and Jesus Christ created everything that was created, John 1:1-3.
  2. Jesus Christ was the agent of God the Father for the creation of everything, 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9.
  3. Jesus Christ the Creator of the world came to the world, John 1:10.
- B. Scripture also affirms that Jesus Christ sustains all creation.
1. The same power with which Jesus created everything, he uses to sustain that creation, Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2-

- 3.
2. Hence, Jesus Christ is the ruler of his creation, Rev. 3:14.

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

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

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

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

**Conclusion:**

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

**Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as Pre-Incarnate God

Philippians 2:5-11

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

## **Introduction:**

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

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

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

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

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

**Body:**

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

- A. The very **creation** in which the second member of the Godhead participated along with the Father and the Holy Spirit bespeaks of our Lord's pre-existence.
1. The Godhead created the world, Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 1:20.
  2. Jesus Christ had an instrumental part within the Godhead in the creation of the world, 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15-17; John 1:1-3.
- B. **Old Testament prophecy** intimates the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.
1. One of the most obvious prophecies that implies the pre-incarnate state of Jesus Christ is **Micah 5:2**—the virgin birth of eternal God into fleshly form.

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

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

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

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

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

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

That He was of higher than earthly origin and nature, He repeatedly asserts. “Ye are from beneath,” he says to the Jews (8:23), “I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world” (compare 17:16). Therefore, He taught that He, the Son of Man, had “descended out of heaven” (3:13), where was His true abode. This carried with it, of course, an assertion of pre-existence; and this pre-existence is explicitly affirmed: “What then,” He asks, “if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?” (6:62). **It is not merely pre-existence, however, but eternal pre-existence which He claims for Himself:** “And now, Father,” He prays (17:5), “glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (compare verse 24); and again, as the most impressive language possible, He declares (8:58 the King James Version): “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am,” where He claims for Himself the timeless present of eternity as His mode of existence. In the former of these two last cited passages, the character of His pre-existent life is intimated; in it He shared the Father’s glory from all eternity (“before the world was”); He stood by the Father’s side as a companion in His glory. (“Person of Christ” emphasis added)

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

The Master asserted His heavenly origin when in debate with the Jews He said, “Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.”

(John 8:23). And shortly before His death, He could pray, “Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:5) (Jackson 2)

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

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

- B. The **apostle John** distinctly taught the pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature of Jesus Christ.
  1. Most Bible students suppose that the Gospel According to John is the lone historian of the Gospel records that treats the pre-existence of Jesus Christ: “John is the only one of the gospels that gives us insight into Jesus’ pre-existence” (Winkler 32); “John’s Gospel teaches the pre-existence of Christ” (“Christology”).
  2. John’s special use of the Greek word, “**Logos**,” teaches the pre-incarnate nature of Jesus Christ, John 1:1-3, 14.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This life had been with the Father prior to the incarnation and is thus eternal. Here is the first of four stages indicated in the sacred writings regarding the second person of the Godhead and points irresistibly to

his deity: (1) his pre-existence in eternity as the Word prior to creation. (Woods)

- C. Each passage where Jesus Christ is **called God** equates to him the same eternity as the other two members of the Godhead, and since Jesus Christ took a bodily form, refer to his pre-existence or pre-incarnate nature, John 20:28; Acts 20:28.
- D. The **apostle Paul** repeatedly taught the pre-existence or pre-incarnate state of Jesus Christ.
1. The apostle Paul taught that Jesus Christ, prior to his incarnation, had an earthly role, **1 Cor. 10:4, 9**.

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

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

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

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

2. Consider **2 Cor. 8:9**.

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

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

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

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

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

Christ is represented in the passages by Paul and John as pre-existent before coming to the earth, and presiding over the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness. ...Here he designates him as the one who

accompanied Israel in the cloud through the wilderness, and gave them deliverances when they needed. (Lipscomb and Shepherd)

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

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

### **Conclusion:**

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

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

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

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

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

**Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as the Incarnate God

1 Timothy 3:16

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

## **Introduction:**

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

## **Body:**

### **I. First, we must define what we mean by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.**

- A. The English word "incarnation" does not appear in our translations.

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

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

- B. The word "incarnation" summarizes or represents in short an

indisputable Bible doctrine.

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

1. The Virgin Birth was the means by which the incarnation of Jesus Christ came about, Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:31-35; 2:11; Galatians 4:4; cf. Genesis 3:15.

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

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

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

The doctrine of the incarnation is fundamental to Christianity, and is the basis upon which the entire fabric of revealed religion rests. It is presented to our faith from the plane of the miraculous, and is to be

considered as the one all-comprehensive miracle of Christianity. (*McClintock and Strong*)

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

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

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

- E. We hasten to acknowledge that Jesus Christ, though incarnate, retained his full Deity.
1. Thomas acknowledged the humanity and Deity of the resurrected Lord, John 20:27-28.
  2. The apostle Paul affirmed the simultaneous humanity and Deity of Jesus Christ, Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 2:9.

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

- A. The Old Testament predicted the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
1. The apostle Paul affirmed that the incarnation of Jesus Christ was "promised fore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" as pertaining to "the seed of David according to the flesh," Rom. 1:2-4.
  2. Genesis 3:15 is the very first intimation of the then future incarnation of Jesus Christ.

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

3. God's promise to Abraham about the blessing upon all humanity through a descendant of Abraham was found to be further intimation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, Gen. 12:3; Acts 3:22-26.

4. The inspired prophecy of Moses respecting another Prophet/Lawgiver (of the New Testament) coming from among the Israelites was found to be further intimation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-26.
5. Prominent Old Testament passages about the Virgin Birth of “the mighty God” foretell the incarnation of Jesus Christ, Isa. 7:14; 9:6.

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

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

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

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

Although the doctrine does not rest for its authority upon isolated proof texts, but rather upon the Scripture revelation as a whole, still there are certain utterances of great weight in which the truth is distinctly, and we may say even formally, stated (see John 1:1-14, cf. 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2-3; Rom 1:2-5; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 2:14). The only way in which the force of these teachings can be set aside or lessened is by proving lack of authority on the part of the Scriptures. (*New Unger’s*)

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

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

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

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

- A. The apostle Paul affirmed that the incarnation of Jesus Christ was “without controversy,” 1 Tim. 3:16.

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

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

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

- C. Denial of the incarnation of Jesus Christ is heresy!
1. Ralph Gilmore correctly assessed Scripture when he wrote that “...the *doctrine* of the incarnation of Jesus is a matter that presents a test of fellowship” (207)

The apostolic writers clearly see that both the deity and the manhood of Jesus are fundamental to his saving work. ...We should, therefore, expect the NT to treat

any denial that Jesus Christ was both truly divine and truly human as a damning heresy, destructive of the gospel; and so it does. (*New Bible Dictionary*)

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

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

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

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

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

whereas the rest of humanity faltered in the flesh, Rom. 8:3.

**Conclusion:**

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

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

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

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

**Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as Master Teacher

Matthew 7:28-29

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

## **Introduction:**

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

## **Body:**

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

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

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

- A. A primary feature of the short ministry of Jesus Christ was

teaching, Matt. 4:23; 5:2; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 21:23; 26:55.

1. Jesus, the Master Teacher, frequently used figurative language in his teaching, i.e. the Power Point, etc. of his day.
2. For instance, “Jesus, the Master Teacher, reveals the mysteries of the kingdom through the teaching of parables” (Ridgeway 38).
3. With word-pictures depicting their everyday lives, the Master Teacher used circumstances with which they were familiar to teach them spiritual truths about which they knew little or nothing.
4. Bruce Daugherty emphasizes that Jesus Christ taught more than lessons, but he instructed people, often individuals besides great audiences, Mark 4:1.

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

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

Jesus is the Teacher without equal because of his trust in the Word of God. Jesus placed great emphasis on the Scriptures (Matt. 4:4; 22:29,31; John 5:39). In contrast, the teachers of Israel did not know the Scriptures (Matt.

22:29; John 3:10,12). Teachers today must emphasize the Scriptures in their lessons. In a day in which some Bible classes imitate television talk shows, we must return to the Scriptures. The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). It is able to build up Christians (Acts 20:32). It alone tells us of Jesus (John 5:39; 8:31-32, 47). (Daugherty 133)

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

Jesus is the teacher without comparison because he taught people in their everyday situations. For many people, religion is separated from their daily life. Not so for Jesus. He taught in parables and stories drawn from daily life. Maybe this is why the common people heard him gladly (Mark 12:37). Jesus demonstrated the impact of Scripture on every day life (Mark 7:1-13). Because of his connection to everyday living his teaching stood in stark contrast to the teaching of the Pharisees (Luke 11:46, 52; Matt. 23:3-4). (Daugherty 133)

- D. Jesus Christ practiced what he taught, Acts 1:1.
1. Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher, in part, because, unlike the Pharisees, Matt. 23:3-5, he practiced what he preached, Matt.16:24.
  2. The most important model on the planet is the one who personifies the Word of God.

Finally, Jesus is the Incomparable Teacher because he modeled what he taught. Jesus is our model for everything, including obedience (John 13:17; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Pet. 2:21). The apostle Paul considered himself a role model for his converts (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil, 3:17). Paul praised his Thessalonian converts for having become imitators of their teachers and the Lord (1

Thess. 1:6-7). As teachers of God's word today, we must have the goal of obedience as we teach (Matt. 7:24-27; Rom. 2:17-21, 25). But to call for obedience means that we ourselves must first be obedient. We cannot lead where we will not go. We cannot give what we do not have first for ourselves. ... We are not simply imparting knowledge as we teach, but we are to be modeling behavior that can be imitated." (Daugherty 134)

- E. The teaching of Jesus Christ demonstrated his Deity.
1. None of our Lord's enemies were able to triumph over him in their verbal confrontations with him—evidencing the Deity of Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

- F. Jesus Christ taught others to be teachers.
1. Jesus, the Master Teacher, purposed to teach his disciples so they in turn could teach others; he told his

disciples he would make them “fishers of men,” Matt. 4:18-22.

2. Likewise, the apostle Paul also instructed Timothy to teach those who could teach others, too, 2 Tim. 2:2.

### **III. God has placed Teachers in the Lord’s church.**

- A. Most of the offices of responsibility in the primitive church pertained to teaching and subsequent edification, 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11.
  1. First Cor. 12:28 lists “apostles...prophets ...teachers.”
  2. Eph. 4:11 lists “apostles... prophets... evangelists...pastors [elders]...teachers.”
  3. Preachers, elders and teachers must arm themselves with God’s Word to be the most effective teachers they can possibly be.
- B. Two of the three divinely given missions of the Lord’s church involve teaching.
  1. Evangelizing the world involves teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost, Matt. 28:19-20.
  2. Edification or building up the church in the holy faith involves teaching, 1 Cor. 14:12, 26.
  3. Every Christian has a responsibility to learn God’s Word thoroughly enough that we can instruct others in it, Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Pet. 3:15.

### **Conclusion:**

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

Teaching was a prominent feature in the ministry of Jesus (Matt. 4:23). The Gospels are composed of a great amount of teaching material. The Sermon on the Mount, the Parables and the discourse on the Mount of Olives are all indicators of the importance of teaching in Jesus’ ministry. The reaction of the people to Jesus’ teaching also indicates that Jesus was the Master Teacher. The Bible says that the people were astonished at his teaching (Matt. 7:28-29; 13:54). They also marveled at his teaching (John 7:15, 32, 44-46). It was teaching that helped set Jesus apart from the other teachers of his day and it is the teaching that also helps demonstrate his Deity. (Daugherty 131)

2. T. Pierce Brown emphasizes that every Christian who teaches, and

especially preachers, need to teach with the purpose of making a real difference in the lives of those who audit our words.

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

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

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

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

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

**Invitation:**

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

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

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# Come Meet Jesus at the Cross

Romans 6:3-6

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

## **Introduction:**

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

## **Body:**

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

- A. Various forms of crucifixion were used by different nations throughout ancient history.
  1. Crucifixion at times and places ranged from a single post on which a person was impaled to an upright post with a crossbar to two rails forming an “X.”
  2. Most ancient nations practiced some form of crucifixion, e.g. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Egyptians, Scythians, Indians, Germans, Persians and Assyrians (Varner 5).
- B. The Roman Empire also employed crucifixion as a form of capital punishment.
  1. The Roman cross was comprised of an upright post of up to 9’ above the ground with a 7’ crossbeam (Hastings qtd. in Varner 4).
  2. Protruding from the upright post was a “peg” (*New Unger’s*) or “a small piece of wood forming a...seat ...designed to bear part of the weight of the body which would otherwise have been too great to be supported by the hands and feet alone. At the top of [the upright post] was a small tablet...which declared the crime and name of the victim” (Varner 4).
  3. The tablet above Jesus’ head on the cross read, “Jesus

- of Nazareth the King of the Jews,” John 19:19; Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38.
- C. The horribleness of crucifixion was intended to intimidate populations so they would be sure to practice civil obedience.
    1. Crimes punishable by crucifixion included piracy, assassination, perjury, and treason (Varner 6).
    2. The Roman Empire ruled the conquered lands annexed to itself not through integration, but solely through abject, iron-fisted and brutish control.
    3. Crucifixion was simply a part of that system of complete mastery.
  - D. The first step in the process of crucifixion was scourging; “...scourging was the terrible introduction to crucifixion—**’the intermediate death’**” (Edersheim emphasis added).
    1. The victim was stripped and tied by his wrists to a short post, exposing his arched back to his tormenter.
    2. A whip consisting of a handle to which were attached several leather cords with pieces of bone and nails affixed to their ends relentlessly flogged the criminal until his flesh was tattered, exposing muscles, bones and perhaps entrails.
    3. “[S]even out of ten men died, literally beaten to death” (Varner 9).
    4. Prophetic Scripture about the scourging of the Messiah indicates the severity of it tore the flesh of our Lord into deep furrows, Psa. 35:15; 129:3; Isa. 50:6.
  - E. After the scourging, the victim was forced to carry at least part of his cross to the crucifixion site.
    1. Crucifixion sites were outside cities on a prominent hill and near a popular highway, Heb. 13:12.
    2. The tablet identifying the criminal and his crime was carried by a herald ahead of the victim (Varner 9).
  - F. The criminal was either tied to or nailed to a wooden cross.
    1. “Arrived at the place of execution, the sufferer was stripped naked...” (*McClintock and Strong*).
    2. Nails were driven through the wrists into the crossbeam versus the hands to help prevent one’s flesh from tearing away from the nails under the weight of the body.

3. The feet were either nailed with two nails to the upright post or using one nail through both ankles atop each other (*Nelson's*).
4. “The cross was then driven into the ground, so that the feet of the condemned were a foot or two above the earth (in pictures of the crucifixion the cross generally much too large and high)... (*McClintock and Strong*).
5. The combination of massive wounds from scourging and new wounds from the nails of crucifixion left one's whole body a severely wounded, putrefied sore, Isa. 1:6 NKJV.
6. Usually victims of Roman crucifixion lingered in slow, excruciating death over the next 36 hours, but some crucified persons barely held on to life for three days, and occasionally longer (“nine days,” *New Unger's*)—depending upon physical conditioning and variables such as the extent of scourging.

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

The one to be crucified was stripped naked of all his clothes, and then followed the most awful moment of

all. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the centre of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. ...to prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not “rest upon nothing but four great wounds,” there was, about the centre of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. Then the “accursed tree” with its living human burden was slowly heaved up and the end fixed firmly in a hole in the ground. The feet were but a little raised above the earth. The victim was in full reach of every hand that might choose to strike. A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly,—dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds, all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries, especially of the head and stomach, became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and, while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed. (qtd. in *Smith's*)

- G. Customarily, four soldiers and a centurion stood guard at a crucifixion to prevent rescue of the victim, John 19:23; Matt. 27:54.
- H. The Romans allowed in Israel some variance to the usual

procedure for crucifixion.

1. Outside of Israel, victims of crucifixion were left to rot on their crosses, and their bodies were ravaged by scavenger birds and dogs.
  2. The Law of Moses forbade the hanging of a body on a tree overnight, which rule was applied likewise to crucifixions on crosses, Deut. 21:22-23; Acts 5:30; 10:39; Gal. 3:13.
  3. The Romans permitted the breaking of the leg bones of persons being crucified to hasten their deaths so their bodies could be removed from the crosses before end of day, John 19:31-34.
- I. Jesus did not just die for you and me, he voluntarily submitted to the most horrible of physical deaths so that we could live spiritually.

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

- A. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross was not a surprise.
1. Old Testament prophecy foretold that the Messiah would humble himself to such a death (scourging and crucifixion), Psa. 22:16-18; 69:21; Isa. 53:1-12.
  2. Jesus, himself, foretold that he would suffer crucifixion on the Roman cross, Matt. 10:38; Luke 14:27.
- B. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the culmination of his earthly ministry to save the world from its sins, John 3:16-17; 1 John 3:16.

...[T]he time of our Saviour's crucifixion is recorded by Mark to be "*the third hour*;" that is, the whole space from nine o'clock to twelve was not quite gone, though it was near at an end; and by the evangelist here it is said, that it was "*about the sixth hour*," that is, near our twelve o'clock. (John 19:14) (Poole)

1. The Christian's imitation of the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Christ leads to salvation, Gal. 2:20; 6:14; Rom. 6:3-13.
  2. By means of the cross, Jesus Christ made reconciliation of humanity (Jew and Gentile) to an infinitely holy God possible, Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20.
- C. Other factors directly relating to Christianity have to do with

the cross of Christ.

1. Through the cross of Christ, the Old Testament was replaced with the New Testament, Col. 2:14.
  2. Through the crucifixion, Jesus Christ became the anti-type of the Passover lamb, Exod. 12:46; John 19:33, 36.
- D. In addition, imagine for a moment the shame or curse of being hanged on a tree that Jesus Christ suffered in our stead.
1. Under Judaism, hanging a dead body on a tree was a signboard of disgrace and shame, Deut. 21:22-23.
  2. Jesus Christ, the Holy Son of God, suffered disgrace and shame that rightly belongs to you and me, Gal 3:13.
  3. The ignoble or humiliating death of Jesus Christ on the cross for many in the first century was a stumbling block to belief, but Christians turned the awful death of Jesus Christ into a glorious memorial to salvation through Christ, 1 Cor. 1:18, 23.
  4. The shame of the cross suffered for us by Jesus resulted in his coronation as King Jesus, King of our lives, Heb. 12:2.
- E. However, many have made themselves enemies of the cross, including both non-Christians and erring Christians, Phil. 3:18.
1. Especially Christians need to be careful that they do not make the “cross of Christ” of “none effect” by substituting human wisdom in place of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 1:17.
  2. There many today also who are offended by the cross of Christ, Gal. 5:11.
- F. Jesus Christ humbled himself by laying aside for awhile the glory due Deity in heaven to die as a sacrifice for sinful mankind—you and me, Phil. 2:7-8; 2 Cor. 5:21.

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

- A. Jesus Christ left the glorious domain of heaven to be a suffering Savior for humanity, John 3:17.
1. Unless we take advantage of the Gospel of Christ, our Lord’s leaving heaven and his vicarious sacrifice on the cross of Calvary were pointless, Rom. 1:16; Heb.

- 5:9.
2. Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost, but we must cooperate with God, Luke 19:10; Phil. 2:12.
- B. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is severely discounted whenever anyone, and especially Christians, fail to practice Christianity in their every waking moments.
1. Jesus is not the Lord of those who neglect or refuse to do his bidding, Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21.
  2. Mankind, and especially Christians, are obligated to think good things and do good things, Phil. 4:8; Titus 2:12.
  3. Christians are obligated to worship God at least weekly in his own appointed way, Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
  4. Christians must evangelize the world with the Gospel, edify themselves with the Word of God and extend benevolence to Christians and non-Christians when they can, Mark 16:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:2; Gal. 6:10.
  5. Christians must be zealous of good works, Titus 2:14; Jam. 2:18.
- C. Think about how our Lord was affixed to the cross of Calvary.
1. Literally, of course, iron nails driven through his flesh into a rough wooden beam fastened Jesus to the cross.
  2. However, Jesus had the power himself to come down from the cross, or to call legions of angels to free him and destroy this world, Matt. 27:40, 42; 26:53.
  3. Essentially, though, not the nails, but **your sins and mine held our Lord tightly to the old rugged cross of Calvary.**
  4. Every sin you and I commit is one more nail attempting to crucify Jesus Christ again, Heb. 6:6.
  5. A form of the Greek word for “cross” or “crucifixion,” a compound word meaning “again” and “crucify,” appears in Heb. 6:6 to describe apostate Christians who were “virtually guilty of crucifying Christ again” (Vine).

### Conclusion:

1. “To the Romans, the cross never had any symbolical meaning being regarded as a means of punishment and execution. With the

spread of Christianity, the cross subsequently acquired momentous historical, theological and legal symbolism...” (Varner 12).

2. In a sense in its rudimentary form, crucifixion on a cross was comparable to execution by guillotine, the gallows, drawing and quartering, firing squad, the electric chair or lethal injection.
3. Everything about being crucified was calculated to cause enormous shame for the victim as well as his family and associates, besides the horror of that death.
4. However, for the child of God, the cross is the emblem of victory through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

#### **Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as the Savior

Luke 2:11

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

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

## **Introduction:**

1. Through this theme, "Come Meet Jesus," already we have considered "Come Meet Jesus as Creator," "Come Meet Jesus as God Incarnate," "Come Meet Jesus as Master Teacher" and "Come Meet Jesus at the Cross."
2. Now, let us consider "Come Meet Jesus as the Savior."
3. Unable to save himself from his sins, mankind desperately needs a divine Savior.
4. Fortunately, Jesus Christ accepted God the Father's mission for him as our Savior.
5. We need to arm ourselves with biblical information regarding Jesus Christ as Savior before we can obtain redemption for ourselves.

## **Body:**

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

- A. The definition of the word "savior" has a basic meaning, but the true significance depends upon the context in which it appears.
  1. The 15 judges between the time of Joshua and King Saul were *physical, human saviors*, Judges 2:16; 3:9, 15.
  2. However, regarding salvation or redemption, Jesus Christ is mankind's *spiritual, divine Savior*.

SAVIOR. A term applied in Scripture, in its highest sense, to Jesus Christ, but in a subordinate manner to human deliverers. ( <i>New Unger's</i> )
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1: one that saves from danger or destruction; 2 : one who brings salvation; *specifically capitalized* : JESUS. (Merriam)

- B. Hebrew and Greek have their respective words that are translated into English as “Savior.”
  - 1. The English word “Savior” appears 37 times in the KJV: 13 in OT; 24 NT.
  - 2. The Hebrew word translated “Savior” is *yasha*’ (yaw-shah’), though altogether the Hebrew word appears 207 times and is translated also as “save,” “rescue,” “deliverer,” “avenging” and “help.”
  - 3. The Greek word translated “Savior” is *soter* (so-tare’) and means “deliverer” (*Biblesoft*’s).
- C. Both testaments also use synonyms for the word “Savior.”
  - 1. “Redeemer” and “Savior” appear as synonyms in Isa. 49:26 and 60:16.
  - 2. The word “redeemer” signifies what is meant respecting Jesus Christ as mankind’s Savior, Isa. 59:20; Titus 2:13-14.

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

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

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

- A. A divine Savior in the person of Jesus Christ who came from heaven to earth is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.
  - 1. The spiritual promise made to Abraham was realized when Jesus Christ came to this poor world of sin as its Savior, Gen. 12:3; Luke 1:68-77.

2. As our Savior, Jesus Christ fulfilled prophecies about removing mankind's sins, Isa. 53:10-11; Jer. 23:5-6; Zech. 9:9.
- B. Jesus Christ came into this world for the express purpose to function as the Savior of mankind.
1. Our Heavenly Father expressly sent Jesus Christ into the world to be our Savior, John 3:17; 1 John 4:14.
  2. At the birth of Jesus, an angel announced to shepherds that their "Savior, which is Christ the Lord" was born, Luke 2:11; compare what an angel told Joseph in Matt. 1:21.
  3. Jesus Christ came to be "the Saviour of all men" (though some will not receive him as Savior), 1 Tim. 4:10.
  4. John the Baptist declared that Jesus Christ would function as Savior by taking "away the sin of the world," John 1:29.
  5. Samaritans acknowledged that Jesus "is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world," John 4:42.
  6. Jesus affirmed that he came to be the world's Savior, Matt. 18:11; Luke 19:10; John 12:47-48.
  7. Jesus Christ became Savior upon his resurrection and subsequent ascension back to heaven, Acts 5:31.
  8. Strictly speaking, though, Jesus Christ is the Savior of the body of Christ, Eph. 5:23.
- C. By consulting the Word of God (Bible) about the mission of our Savior, we can obtain salvation for ourselves.
1. Studying Scripture will enable one to find salvation from the Savior, 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Pet. 3:18.
  2. Christians can look confidently toward the end of time for the return of the Savior, Phil. 3:20.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Jesus Christ is our Savior, who "was manifested to take away our sins," Titus 1:4; 1 John 3:5.
2. Because Jesus Christ is Savior, the apostle Peter acknowledged that Jesus possessed "the words of eternal life," John 6:68.
3. Because Jesus Christ is Savior, the apostle Paul repeatedly affirmed that salvation is obtainable exclusively through Jesus Christ, Acts 13:23, 38-39; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Thess. 5:9
4. With Job's statement in Job 19:25 we concur confidently: "I know

that my redeemer liveth,” i.e. Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as Messiah and King

John 1:41; 4:25-26

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

## **Introduction:**

1. The terms Messiah and King relative to Jesus Christ are interrelated.
2. Together, they bring to fruition all the Old Testament prophecies about the redemption of fallen humanity.
3. Already we have directed our attention to "Come Meet Jesus as Creator," "Come Meet Jesus as God Incarnate," "Come Meet Jesus as Master Teacher," "Come Meet Jesus at the Cross" and "Come Meet Jesus as the Savior."
4. Today, "Come Meet Jesus as Messiah and King."

## **Body:**

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

- A. The Word Messiah (OT) or Messias (NT) appears in both testaments.
  1. The **Hebrew word** for Messiah is *mashiyach* (maw-shee'-akh), which means "anointed; usually a consecrated person (as a king, priest, or saint); specifically, the Messiah" (*Biblesoft's*).
  2. This Hebrew word appears 39 times in Old Testament: 37 times as "anointed" and twice as "Messiah," Dan. 9:25-26.
  3. The "Heb. *mashiyach* in all the thirty-nine instances of its occurring in the Old Testament, is rendered by the LXX [Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT] 'Christos'" (Easton).
  4. The **Greek word** for Messiah (Messias) is *Messias* (mes-see'-as), which is "of Hebrew origin" (*Biblesoft's*).
  5. Messiah (Messias) only appears twice in the New Testament, John 1:41; 4:25.

- B. The New Testament more often uses another word as a synonym for Messiah.
1. The Greek word *christos* (khris-tos') translated "Christ" means "anointed, i.e. the Messiah, an epithet of Jesus" (*Biblesoft's*).
  2. "*Christos* means 'smeared on,' 'anointed,' and as a noun (to' christon) 'ointment.' It never relates to persons in the nonbiblical sphere" (Kittel and Friedrich).

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

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

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

3. *Christos* appears 572 times in the New Testament and is translated as "Christ" in all instances except Acts

10:48 where it is translated as “Lord.”

4. “The word Christ is...almost invariably used instead of Messiah in the NT as the official designation of our Lord” (*New Unger’s*).

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

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

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

The number of passages in the OT regarded by the Jews in pre-Christian times as prophetic of the Messiah is much larger than that of the special predictions to which Christians have commonly appealed. It is stated by Edersheim to be more than 456... (*New Unger’s*)

- B. The Christ child was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, Luke 2:25-32.
  1. Many of the Psalms are Messianic, 2; 16:7-11; 67; 68:28-35; 69; 72:1-19; 93; 96; 97; 98; 99; 110; 118:19-29.
  2. Philip acknowledged that the Old Testament prophecies declared a Messiah, John 1:45.
  3. Jesus Christ chided his apostles for not knowing that the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah foretold his suffering, Luke 24:25-27.
- C. Inspired first century apostles and preachers constantly

referred to Old Testament prophecies about the Christ, Acts 3:14-18, 22-26.

1. The apostle Paul “reasoned...out of the Scriptures” through his teaching and preaching that the Old Testament foretold of the suffering, but victorious, Messiah, Acts 9:22; 17:2-3; 26:22-23; Rom. 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:3-4.
  2. The apostle Peter, likewise, preached about the prophesied suffering Christ (Messiah), 1 Pet. 1:10-11.
- D. There was an air of expectancy in the first century for the coming of the long promised Messiah.

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

1. Andrew found his brother Peter to inform him that the long awaited Messiah had come, John 1:40-41.
  2. The woman at the well who conversed with Jesus admitted that the world waited for the coming Messiah, John 4:25-26, 29.
  3. The Samaritans acknowledged that Jesus “is the Christ [Messiah] and Savior of the world,” John 4:42.
  4. Peter strongly affirmed that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah), Matt. 16:15-16; Acts 4:26-27.
- E. Jesus unmistakably declared himself to be the Messiah.
1. Jesus told the woman at the well that he is the Messiah, John 4:25-26.
  2. Jesus affirmed to the high priest and other religious leaders that he was the Christ (Messiah), Matt. 26:63-64.
- F. God the Father anointed Jesus at the Christ (Messiah), Acts 4:26-27.
1. The word translated “Messiah” means “anointed” and “is used in the Old Testament of kings and priests, who were consecrated to office by the ceremony of anointing” (*ISBE*).
  2. “[P]riests (Ex. 28:41; 40:15; Num. 3:3), prophets (1 Kings 19:16), and kings (1 Sam. 9:16; 16:3; 2 Sam.

12:7) were anointed with oil, and so consecrated to their respective offices” (Easton).

3. Jesus of Nazareth is Prophet, Priest and King, anointed of God for each of these roles, which rolled into one Jesus is the Christ, our Messiah.

G. However, the Jews popularly held a skewed or incorrect view of what that Messiah would be like.

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

1. To think “Messiah” in the first century was to think “king,” and properly so.
2. *Merriam Webster* defines “Messiah” as “**1a**: the expected king and deliverer of the Jews.”
3. The typical first century Jewish mistake was to expect the Messiah-King to establish a physical kingdom rather than a spiritual kingdom, John 18:36.

H. Jesus of Nazareth (God incarnate through the virgin birth) is the Messiah-King.

1. The Great King was prophesied to make his triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding the lowly donkey, Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5.
2. Jesus was “born King of the Jews,” Matt. 2:2.
3. Jesus acknowledged that he was “the King of the Jews,” Matt. 27:11, 29, 37.
4. Jesus “the King” is “eternal, immortal, invisible,” 1 Tim. 1:17.
5. Jesus Christ is the “only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,” 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16.

6. Jesus Christ is “King of saints,” Rev. 15:3.

**Conclusion:**

1. The need for a Messiah first grew out of the tragedy of sin introduced in the Garden of Eden, because of the maliciousness of the devil, through duping humanity represented in the first pair.
2. Immediately, God began preparing mankind for redemption through a Messiah-King, Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 3:10-11; 1 Pet. 1:18-21.

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

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

**Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as High Priest

Hebrews 9:7-12

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

## **Introduction:**

1. The theme “Come Meet Jesus” includes “Come Meet Jesus as **Creator**,” “Come Meet Jesus as **God Incarnate**,” “Come Meet Jesus as **Master Teacher**,” “Come Meet Jesus **at the Cross**,” “Come Meet Jesus as **Savior**,” “Come Meet Jesus as **Messiah-King**” and now also “Come Meet Jesus as **High Priest**.”
2. As High Priest, Jesus Christ does for us before the Heavenly Father what we cannot do for ourselves, namely making intercession with God.

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

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

## **Body:**

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

- A. The priesthood of Melchisedec differed from the Aaronic priesthood under the Law of Moses.
  1. Melchisedec’s priesthood did not pertain to a certain tribe or family within a tribe like the Aaronic priesthood, Heb. 7:1-3; Gen. 14:18-20.
  2. The priesthood after the order of Melchisedec is “unchangeable” and is ‘forever’ or ‘continues,’ Heb. 6:20; 7:23-24, 28.
- B. The writer of Hebrews presents evidence that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the priesthood under the Law of Moses, Heb. 7:4-10.

1. Consequently, since the priesthood of Jesus Christ is after the order of Melchisedec, then our Lord's priesthood also is superior to the Aaronic priesthood, Heb. 7:11.
  2. The priesthood under Christianity is different from and superior to the priesthood under Judaism, Heb. 7:12-17.
- C. God the Father made Jesus Christ our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, Heb. 5:10.
1. God called Jesus Christ to be his priest after the order of Melchisedec in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, Heb. 5:4-6; Psalm 2:7; 110:4.
  2. Jesus Christ was made High Priest with a Divinely made oath, Heb. 7:20-21.

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

- A. Jesus Christ is called "the Apostle and High Priest," Heb. 3:1.
1. God the Father appointed Jesus Christ to be our High Priest, Heb. 5:5.
  2. As High Priest, Jesus Christ is "over the house of God," Heb. 10:21.
  3. As our High Priest, Jesus Christ is "merciful and faithful," Heb. 2:17.
- B. Jesus Christ as our High Priest has "passed into the heavens," Heb. 4:14.
1. Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, "is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," Heb 8:1.
  2. Jesus Christ would not qualify to be a priest if his priesthood pertained to Judaism, Heb. 7:13-14; 8:4.
- C. Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is superior to the high priests under Judaism.
1. Jesus Christ is a superior High Priest because though "tempted like as we are," he is "without sin," Heb. 4:15.
  2. Since Jesus Christ came in the flesh and was tempted in the same ways we are tempted, our High Priest has compassion on us.
  3. As High Priest, Jesus Christ ministers in a greater tabernacle than in which Aaronic priests ministered, Heb. 9:11.

4. The superiority of Jesus Christ as High Priest includes making a single offering rather than daily and annual offerings, Heb. 9:25; 10:11-12.
  5. Unlike other high priests that served under the Law of Moses, Jesus Christ as our High Priest “is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” Heb. 7:26-28.
- D. The purpose of a high priest is to “offer gifts and sacrifices for sins,” Heb. 5:1.
1. Hence, Jesus Christ as our High Priest was “ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices,” Heb. 8:3.
  2. Whereas the high priest under Judaism went into the Holy of Holies once annually to atone for sins, Jesus Christ as our High Priest entered once into the true Holy of Holies, not with animal blood, but with his own blood, Heb. 9:7-12, 25.
- E. Christians are subordinate priests to Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6.

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

**Conclusion:**

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

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

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

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

**Invitation:**

1. As our sinless, High Priest in heaven with God, Jesus Christ is our perfect mediator or intercessor, 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; 8:6.
2. However, Jesus Christ our High Priest can only intercede and mediate for faithful children of God, Mark 16:16; Acts 8:22; Rev. 2:10.

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# Come Meet Jesus as Mediator, Intercessor & Advocate

1 Timothy 2:5

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

## **Introduction:**

1. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between humanity and God.
2. Jesus Christ is intercessor between mankind and God.
3. In addition, Jesus Christ is mankind's advocate with God.
4. Jesus Christ is mankind's sole access to a Holy God, John 14:6.

## **Body:**

- I. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between humanity and God.**
  - A. Just what is a "mediator"?

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

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

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

3. The *ISBE* notes that a mediator is a “middleman,” and further the English Word “mediator” appears in the Old Testament only in the Septuagint for Job 9:33 plus six times in the New Testament.
  4. The hostility between mankind and God is sin that man has committed (or omitted Jam. 4:17), and through addressing the problem of sin, Jesus Christ mediates between man and God.
  5. Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says that a mediator is an “umpire.”
- B. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament have their respective mediators.
1. Moses functioned as the mediator between Israel and God under Judaism, Exod. 20:19-22; Deut. 5:5.
  2. The apostle Paul acknowledged that Moses was the mediator of the Old Testament, Gal. 3:19-20.
  3. However, Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Testament, 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15; 12:24.
  4. Speaking of the New Testament, our Lord “is the mediator of a better covenant,” Heb. 8:6.
  5. Again, the mediation of Jesus Christ revolves around removing the hostility of man’s sin between mankind and God, 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:12-15.

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

### A. What is an intercessor?

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

1. Literally, the word “intercession” means “to come between” (*ISBE*).

2. Simply put, in the Bible, intercession is: “The act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group” (*Nelson’s*).
  3. *Nelson’s* notes that some of the earliest occasions of someone acting as an intercessor were in the persons of Abraham for the City of Sodom and Moses for Israel.
  4. However, successful intercession also depends upon those for whom intercession is made obeying the Word of God, John 17:9.
  5. There was no need of an intercessor between man and God until sin separated between the first pair and God in the Garden of Eden, Gen. 3:8.
- B. The apostle Paul characterized the ministry of our Lord as “the ministry of reconciliation,” 2 Cor. 5:18-19.
1. Formerly, the prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah or Christ would make “intercession for the transgressors,” Isa. 53:12.
  2. Being “at the right hand of God” since his Ascension, Jesus Christ is precisely positioned to make “intercession for us,” Rom. 8:34.
  3. The intercession made for by us by Jesus Christ is ongoing, “seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for” us, Heb. 7:25, or as Easton expresses it: “This intercession is an essential part of his mediatorial work.”
  4. “The ministry of reconciliation” pertains to making “reconciliation for the sins of the people”—you and me, Heb. 2:17.
- C. Scripture also notes two additional intercessors besides Jesus Christ.
1. First, the Holy Spirit participates in intercession between mankind and God, Rom. 8:26-27.
  2. In a much inferior consideration, Christians through their prayers make intercession for their fellow mankind, 1 Tim. 2:1.

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

#### A. What is an advocate?

ADVOCATE (Grk. parakletos, “paraclete”). One who pleads the cause of another. The term is applied by Jesus to the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7),

where it is rendered Helper [NKJV] [“Comforter” KJV]; and by John to Christ Himself (1 John 2:1). The word advocate (Lat. advocatus) might designate a consulting lawyer or one who presents his client’s case in open court; or one who, in times of trial or hardship, sympathizes with the afflicted and administers suitable direction and support. (*New Unger’s*)

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

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

1. Jesus and the apostle John used a term known in the first century Palestine to refer to someone who represented another in a court of law, cf. Acts 24:1.
2. There is no one better suited than Jesus Christ to represent humanity as Defense Lawyer before God Almighty in the divine court of heaven

### **Conclusion:**

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

sin is removed between man and God, Isa. 59:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:21.

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

**Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as Lawgiver and Prophet

Deuteronomy 18:15

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

## **Introduction:**

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

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

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

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

## **Body:**

- I. **Whereas Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is the Lawgiver of the New Testament.**
  - A. What does the Bible mean by the use of the word “lawgiver”?
    1. The English word “lawgiver” appears only six times in both testaments combined: five in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament.
    2. However, the Hebrew word sometimes translated

“lawgiver” appears 19 times.

3. It pertains to making laws.
  4. Ultimately, Jehovah is the Lawgiver, the One from whom all divine law comes, Isa. 33:22 and Jam. 4:12.
  5. However, God appointed Moses as lawgiver of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ as Lawgiver of the New Testament.
- B. Moses occupied a special position as lawgiver of the Old Testament.
1. Moses was more than a prophet, a lawgiver with whom God communicated directly instead of through visions and dreams, Num. 12:6-7; cf. Deut. 34:10.
  2. The apostle John wrote that Moses gave the Law (Old Testament), whereas Jesus Christ personally brought the Gospel (New Testament), John 1:17; 7:19.
  3. Moses did not author the Law or Old Testament, but he was the one who inaugurated it for God among men.
  4. Likewise, Jesus Christ inaugurated the Old Testament’s replacement, the New Testament, for God among men.
- C. Jesus Christ as antitype to Moses, is the Lawgiver of the New Testament.
1. The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ definitively transfers the responsibility as God’s lawgiver from Moses to Jesus Christ, Matt. 17:5; cf. Matt. 3:17; John 12:28; 2 Pet. 1:17-18.
  2. Commenting on Matt. 17:5, one commentator wrote:

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

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

- A. What does the Bible mean by the use of the word “prophet” respecting either Moses or Jesus Christ?

1. Prophets of God sometimes were both foretellers and forthtellers, more often the latter.

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

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

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

- B. Moses occupied a special position as the great prophet of the Old Testament.
  1. The relationship that Moses sustained with God as his special prophet exceeded that of any other prophets, until Jesus Christ came into the world, Deut. 34:10; *cf.* Num. 12:6-7.
  2. Moses was the great Old Testament prophet who foreshadowed the great New Testament prophet, Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37.
  3. There was no prophet of the same caliber and function of Moses until Jesus Christ.
- C. Jesus Christ as antitype to Moses, is the Great Prophet of the New Testament.
  1. Jesus was recognized as a prophet of God by the common people in first century Israel, Matt. 21:11;

- Luke 7:16.
2. Because of his miracles and teaching (validated by his miracles), Jesus was viewed by people of his generation as the Prophet of whom Moses prophesied, John 6:14; 7:40.
  3. Philip declared to his brother Nathaniel that Jesus is the Prophet of whom Moses prophesied, John 1:45.
  4. The Samaritans believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah or Prophet of whom Moses wrote (they only revered the first five books of the Old Testament), John 4:25-26, 42.
  5. “But to be a Prophet meant to a Samaritan that He was the Messiah, since they acknowledged none other after Moses” (Edersheim).
  6. Jesus Christ himself applied Deut. 18:15, 18 to himself, and he declared that had the Jews believed the prophecies of Moses, they would have recognized that him as the Prophet of whom Moses wrote, John 5:46.
  7. Jesus claimed to be the Prophet of which the Old Testament prophesied, Luke 4:16-21; 13:33; John 4:26 (Messiah or Prophet to the Samaritans).
  8. God the Father declared that Jesus was the one, superceding Moses, to whom mankind should hearken, Matt. 17:5.
  9. Commenting on Matt. 17:5, one commentator wrote, “Jesus is the prophet and the lawgiver now. He is the one who speaks from heaven, and the mediator of the new covenant. (Heb. 12:22-25.) (Dorris)
- D. Prophet Jesus is superior to the prophet Moses, and the New Testament institution is superior to the Old Testament institution, Heb. 3:2-6.
1. Moses as prophet and lawgiver administered God’s law while on earth.
  2. Jesus Christ as the Great Prophet and Lawgiver administers God’s law (Gospel or New Testament) from heaven.

**Conclusion:**

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

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

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

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

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

3. Jesus Christ as the Great Prophet and Lawgiver was authorized to replace the Old Testament with the New Testament, Matt. 28:18 ASV; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:6.

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

### Invitation:

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

John 1:9.

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

Ephesians 1:22-23

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

## **Introduction:**

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

## **Body:**

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

- A. The apostle Paul distinctly and repeatedly wrote by divine

inspiration that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church.

1. Paul affirmed in two chapters of the Ephesian epistle that Jesus Christ is the head of the church, Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23.
  2. In Eph. 1:22-23 and 5:23, the apostle Paul uses the words “church” and “body” interchangeably.
  3. Paul also emphasized to the church at Colosse that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church while he is also Head of the body, Col. 1:18.
- B. Only Jesus Christ is the Head of his church.
1. This means that Jesus Christ alone is the brains and mouth for the church.
  2. Our Lord alone is the director or leader of his church.
  3. Jesus alone occupies the place of chief honor in the church.
  4. Jesus Christ alone has arisen to the top respecting his church.
  5. Jesus Christ alone as Head of his church determines the direction or course of the church.
- C. No one else, and especially no one on earth, is head of the church that Jesus established (contrary to what religious leaders may claim for themselves).

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

- A. The apostle Paul distinctly and repeatedly wrote by divine inspiration that Jesus Christ is the Head of his spiritual body.
1. We already observed that the apostle Paul used the words “church” and “body” interchangeably in Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18.
  2. In Eph. 4:15-16, as well as Col. 2:19, the apostle Paul describes the church as a body with its many members over which Jesus Christ is the Head, cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-31; Rom. 12:4-5.
- B. Only Jesus Christ is the Head of his spiritual body.
1. This means that Jesus Christ alone is the brains and mouth for his spiritual body.
  2. Our Lord alone is the director or leader of his spiritual body.
  3. Jesus alone occupies the place of chief honor in his spiritual body.
  4. Jesus Christ alone has arisen to the top respecting his

spiritual body.

5. Jesus Christ alone as Head of his spiritual body determines the direction or course of his spiritual body.
- C. No one else, and especially no one on earth, is head of our Lord's spiritual body (contrary to what religious leaders may claim for themselves).

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

- A. The apostle Paul distinctly and repeatedly wrote by divine inspiration that Jesus Christ is the Head of his spiritual house or family.
1. The apostle uses the words "church" and "house of God" as interchangeable terms, 1 Tim. 3:15.
  2. *Robertson's* records of 1 Tim. 3:15 about the words "house of God": "Probably here 'household of God,' that is 'the family of God.'"
  3. Likewise, the writer of Hebrews acknowledges that Jesus Christ is "over his own house," Heb. 3:2-6.
  4. The apostle Peter adds that Christians are the spiritual stones with which Christ's spiritual house is built, 1 Pet. 2:5.
- B. Only Jesus Christ is the Head of his spiritual house or family.
1. This means that Jesus Christ alone is the brains and mouth for his spiritual house or family.
  2. Our Lord alone is the director or leader of his spiritual family.
  3. Jesus alone occupies the place of chief honor in his spiritual house.
  4. Jesus Christ alone has arisen to the top respecting his spiritual family.
  5. Jesus Christ alone as Head of his spiritual house determines the direction or course of his spiritual house.
- C. No one else, and especially no one on earth, is head of our Lord's spiritual house or family (contrary to what religious leaders may claim for themselves).

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

- A. Jesus Christ is "the head stone of the corner," Psa. 118:22; Matt. 21:42-43; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph.

2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6-7.

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

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

1. This stone of prophecy that the Jewish leaders rejected but God chose is Jesus Christ, Gen. 49:24; Isa. 28:16; Rom. 9:33.
2. Jesus Christ is the living cornerstone to the same spiritual building that is comprised of Christians as living stones, 1 Pet. 2:5-7.
- B. Jesus Christ is “the head of every man,” 1 Cor. 11:3.
- C. Jesus Christ “is the head of all principality and power,” Col. 2:10.

**Conclusion:**

1. It is apparent that the church, body and house or family, each of which Jesus Christ heads, are different references to the same divine institution.
2. Since Jesus Christ is Head of the church, and the church and the body are the same thing, then Our Lord is likewise Head of his spiritual body, Eph. 1:22-23.
3. Col. 1:18 records this information in reverse; since Jesus Christ is Head of the body, and the body and the church are the same thing, then Our Lord is likewise Head of his church.
4. Jesus Christ is the Head of his spiritual house or family.
5. Jesus Christ is unquestionably Head of his church, his spiritual body, his house or family and everything that matters.

**Invitation:**

1. If Jesus Christ is not the Head of your life, then you need to obey the Gospel, Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
2. Jesus saves the obedient and adds them to his church, which is his spiritual body and his spiritual family, Heb. 5:9; Acts 2:47.
3. Those who are already the spiritual stones that comprise our Lord's

spiritual house or family need to remain faithful and repent when we stumble in sin, Rev. 2:10; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

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# Come Meet Jesus as the Judge

Revelation 20:11-15

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

## **Introduction:**

1. Through a number of lessons, we have been urged to “Come Meet Jesus”:
  - a. As Creator
  - b. As Pre-Incarnate God
  - c. As the Incarnate God
  - d. As Master Teacher
  - e. At the Cross
  - f. As Savior
  - g. As Messiah and King
  - h. As High Priest
  - i. As Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate
  - j. As Lawgiver and Prophet
  - k. As the Head of his church, body and house.
2. One final lesson after this one will call upon us to “Come Meet Jesus the Preeminent One.”
  - a. This lesson encourages us to “Come Meet Jesus as the Judge.”
  - b. We will do this by proposing some questions for which we will look for biblical answers.

## **Body:**

- I. **What does the Bible teach about the certainty of a Final Judgment?**
  - A. The Bible teaches that Final Judgment is an appointment for which a soul can neither be late nor avoid, Heb. 9:27.
  - B. Final Judgment, and Jesus Christ being the Judge, is a matter of fundamental, Christian doctrine, Heb. 6:1-2.
  - C. Final Judgment will be so thorough that even “the secrets of men” and “the counsels... [“purposes” *Biblesoft’s*] of hearts” will be examined, Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5.

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

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

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

- A. The living and the dead will be judged in Final Judgment.
  - 1. The apostle Peter preached (and Luke the inspired historian recorded) that Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead, Acts 10:42; cf. 1 Pet. 4:5.
  - 2. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead, 2 Tim. 4:1.
- B. The “small and great” will be judged, Rev. 20:12.
- C. “Ungodly men” will be judged, 2 Pet. 3:7; Jude 14-15.
- D. “The persons to be judged are, (1) the whole race of Adam without a single exception (Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; Rev. 20:11-15); and (2) the fallen angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6)” (Easton).

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

- A. Souls will be judged according to how they conducted themselves on earth toward their fellow man.
  - 1. Jesus Christ portrayed Final Judgment as pertaining to how people treated each other, especially how the less fortunate were treated, Matt. 25:31-46.
  - 2. Souls will be judged according to what they have “done, whether it be good or bad,” 2 Cor. 5:10.
  - 3. Solomon cautioned youth, for instance, to be careful respecting how they lived their lives because God would remember to bring their conduct into Final

Judgment, Ecc. 11:9.

- B. Souls will be judged according to righteousness.
  - 1. The apostle Paul preached in Athens that Jesus “will judge the world in righteousness,” Acts 17:31.
  - 2. There is a difference between the righteousness of man and the righteousness of God, Rom. 10:3.
  - 3. Man must appeal to Jesus Christ on his terms to be deemed righteous, 2 Cor. 5:21.
- C. Every soul will be judged according to the divine revelation by which he was bound, Rev. 20:12.
- D. Every soul will be judged ‘according to his works,’ Rev. 20:12; Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10.

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

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

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

- A. Only two possibilities exist for outcomes of the Final Judgment.
  - 1. Jesus Christ identified the two possibilities as “the resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of damnation,” John 5:29.
  - 2. Otherwise, Scripture refers to eternal heaven and eternal hell, Matt. 23:23; 25:46; John 14:3.
  - 3. Scripture nowhere portrays more than two possible eternal destinations, though some religious people imagine that there are four or more possible eternal destinations.
- B. Admission to eternal heaven with God is variously illustrated in Scripture.
  - 1. The apostle Paul referred to the “righteous judge” giving “a crown of righteousness” to each soul who is commended at the Final Judgment, 2 Tim. 4:8.
  - 2. The apostle John recorded Jesus referring to “a crown of life,” Rev. 2:10.

3. The apostle Peter called it “a crown of glory,” 1 Pet. 5:4.

**Conclusion:**

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

**Invitation:**

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

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# Come Meet Jesus as the Preeminent One

Colossians 1:18

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

## **Introduction:**

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

## **Body:**

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

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

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

- A. Satan desired preeminence over Jesus Christ.
  - 1. One temptation that Satan hurled at Jesus Christ was the offer to surrender the kingdoms of this world to our Lord in exchange for Jesus worshipping him, Matt. 4:8-9.
  - 2. As King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ triumphed over all the kingdoms of this world anyway, 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 11:15.
- B. Even Christians sometimes seek preeminence that belongs exclusively to Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Unfortunately, even some Christians seek preeminence within the Lord's church, as Diotrephes did, 3 John 9-10.
  - 2. The Greek word for "preeminence" in 3 John 9 is a related but differing word from the "preeminence" ascribed to Jesus Christ in Col. 1:18.
  - 3. The word for "preeminence" in 3 John 9 is the compound word *philoproteuo*, meaning "to be fond of being first, i.e. ambitious of distinction" (*Biblesoft's*).
  - 4. This wrong use of "preeminence" ascribed to Diotrephes appears only in 3 John 9.
- C. Other religious people also seek preeminence that rightfully belongs only to Jesus Christ.
  - 1. One of the titles of the Catholic pope is "Vicar of Christ," which is defined: "A title of the pope implying his supreme and universal primacy, both of honour and of jurisdiction, over the Church of Christ" ("Vicar of Christ").
  - 2. The Mormon Church has its "Prophet and President": "The current prophet and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Gordon B. Hinckley" ("Living Prophets and Apostles").
  - 3. Various religious groups have exalted leaders that purport to have the prerogative to change divine law and implement new religious doctrine.
  - 4. However, only Jesus Christ is the Head of his church and the Preeminent One, Col. 1:18.
- D. In some senses, mankind has no preeminence even over the

brutish beasts of the animal kingdom.

1. Of course, though the world in which we live that has been steeped in evolutionary origins does not realize it, mankind is superior to the animal kingdom because God placed within mankind “a living soul,” Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:45.
2. The “living soul” is unique to humans and involves the spiritual nature of humanity since God did not act in the same way respecting the rest of creation, including the animal kingdom.
3. However, owing to death and our mortal existence, mankind cannot claim for itself preeminence over other spirit beings, Psa. 8:4-5; Heb. 2:6-7.
4. Respecting death, mankind is more nearly like the animal world when it comes to the consideration of preeminence, Ecc. 3:19.

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

- A. The preeminence of Jesus Christ is evident in passages exalting him.
  1. Speaking prophetically, Zacharias (father of John the Baptist) referred to Jesus Christ as “the Highest,” Luke 1:76.
  2. “The preeminence of Jesus is here designated by the ‘Most High’” [ASV] (Boles).
  3. The “only begotten” passages applying to Jesus Christ speak to his preeminence, John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9.
- B. In a sense, the preeminence of Jesus Christ exceeds the eminence of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, too.
  1. Jesus Christ has experienced both the majesty of Deity and the contrasting poverty of human creation.
  2. Consequently, Jesus Christ enjoys a preeminence that exceeds the consideration of all others including the other members of the Godhead.
  3. In Jesus Christ, all things in heaven and on earth speak to his preeminence, Eph. 1:10.
  4. “Ephesians and Colossians are twin epistles, similar in thought and style, extolling the preeminence of Christ...” (*ISBE*) as evidenced by comparing Col. 1:18

and Eph. 1:10.

- C. Colossians 1:18 defines Jesus Christ as the Preeminent One.
1. Being Head of the body and the church (along with all the other appellations applied to Jesus Christ, many that we have noted in our series, “Come Meet Jesus”) speaks to the preeminence of Jesus Christ.
  2. Having a fleshly body whereby he experienced existence as creation in addition to being Creator, resurrected to die no more, Jesus Christ alone is the Preeminent One.

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

3. “As firstborn of all creation, head of the church, and firstborn from the dead, Christ is *proteuon* (“preeminent”) in everything” (Kittel and Friedrich).

...Christ, being Owner, Lord, and Prince of every creature, as he is God-man, or ordained to human nature, he hath the preeminence of the whole creation, and is the chief, Ps 2:7, 8 Heb 1:2, 6. (Poole)

4. “...that he might come to have first place in everything” (Bauer, Gingrich and Danker).
- D. Several commentators address the preeminence afforded Jesus Christ in the last portion of Col. 1:18.

The last phrase of 1:18 may also be translated, “That he might have the preeminence among all,” referring to Christ’s preeminence among the dead as well as the living. Christ has preeminence both among all things and among all people, living and dead alike. (Fields 152)

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

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

**Conclusion:**

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

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

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

**Invitation:**

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

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# I Will Execute Judgment

Exodus 12:12

**Thesis:** To press the need for looking ahead to and making preparation for Final Judgment based on biblical information gleaned from the various judgments of God, especially upon his people in times past.

## **Introduction:**

1. Final Judgment is a topic addressed in both testaments of the Bible, Ecc. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10.
2. In addition, the Bible records several judgments by God of humanity, especially the people of God.
3. We can learn valuable principles from examining the various judgments God executed upon humanity in the past.
4. With these principles, such as how God reacts to disobedience and how God rewards obedience, we can better prepare ourselves for Final Judgment.

## **Body:**

- I. Several judgments by God of humanity extend from shortly after creation through the close of the first century.**
  - A. The first judgment by God of humanity occurred following the sin of Adam and Eve.
    1. Adam and Eve sinned or disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, Gen. 2:17; 3:3, 6.
    2. Consequently, God assigned labor “pain” (ASV) to woman and subjection to her husband, Gen. 3:15; and God told Adam that the earth would only produce crops thereafter with much “toil” (ASV), Gen. 3:16.
    3. Finally, God expelled Adam and Eve from his presence in the Garden of Eden, Gen. 3:23-24.
    4. Adam and Eve died spiritually and began to die physically also, Rom. 5:12; 6:23.
    5. Obedience and Eden’s bliss are associated with each other, whereas disobedience is associated with death or separation, Jam. 2:26.
  - B. God judged the world through the worldwide flood of Noah’s day.

1. Almost every person on the earth had become wicked and violent preceding the Great Flood, Gen. 6:5, 11.
  2. Only eight souls on the entire earth were spared, 2 Pet. 3:20.
  3. Obedience saved eight souls; disobedience caused the rest of humanity to perish.
- C. The judgment by God of humanity occurred at the Tower of Babel.
1. God had instructed humanity after the flood to populate all the earth, but mankind refused to disperse, Gen. 9:1.
  2. Though the descendants of Noah had begun to repopulate the earth, they decided to disregard God's command after all, Gen. 9:19; 11:2-4.
  3. God destroyed the Tower of Babel, confused man's language and scattered him around the globe, Gen. 11:7-9.
  4. Evidently, mankind did not learn well from the Great Flood that disobedience of God's instructions results in judgment by God.
- D. The Ten Plagues upon Egypt, preceding the Exodus of Israel from slavery there, is an example of God's judgment, Exod. 12:12; Acts 13:17.
- E. A series of God's judgments against the nation of Israel occurred following Israel's exodus from Egypt over the next 40 years.
1. A disobedient generation died in the 40 years of judgments by God, Num. 32:13; Josh. 5:6; Heb. 3:17.
  2. Stephen used the 40 years of wilderness wandering, as did the apostle Paul, in teaching contemporaries of the need to obey God, Acts 7:39, 42; 1 Cor. 10:1-11.
  3. God's reaction, respectively, toward obedience and toward disobedience is evident in these judgments.
- F. God continued to exact judgments against Israel throughout the balance of the Old Testament record.
1. A series of judgments by God against Israel appear in Scripture respecting the period of the Judges (for hundreds of years), Judges 2:14-16; Acts 13:20.
  2. God brought judgment against the northern kingdom of Israel in the form of defeat and captivity by the nation

- of Assyria (721 B.C.), 2 Kings 17:5-18.
- 3. Later, God brought judgment against the southern kingdom of Judah in the form of defeat and captivity by the nation of Babylon (587 B.C.), Matt. 1:17; Acts 7:43.
- 4. God's reaction, respectively, toward obedience and toward disobedience is evident in these judgments.
- G. The New Testament closes with divine predictions about the impending judgment by God against the nation of Israel in the form of complete destruction by the Roman Empire.
  - 1. Jesus Christ himself uttered this prophecy, Matt. 24:3-34.
  - 2. The consequence of disobedience toward God is clearly seen in the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem.

## **II. The great Final Judgment by God of humanity awaits mankind's entrance into eternity.**

- A. Final Judgment is a topic addressed in both testaments of the Bible, Ecc. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10.
  - 1. How souls lived their lives will affect where they spend eternity, Rom. 2:5-6.
  - 2. Even the secrets of men will be judged, Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5.
- B. Final Judgment will encompass all nations or the entire world, Matt. 25:31-32; Acts 17:31
- C. Jesus Christ came to the world to be its Savior, but when he returns it will be as Supreme Judge, John 12:47; Rom. 14:9-12.
- D. Upon his return, Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead, Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27.
- E. Final Judgment will determine the eternal disposition of all souls, Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29.
- F. Standing before the Great White Judgment Throne, one's obedience or disobedience in his or her life will make all the difference in eternity, Rev. 20:12-15.

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Just as surely as God executed judgment upon the Egyptians, other nations and the people of God throughout history, God will execute Final Judgment upon all humanity.
- 2. God predictably will punish disobedience, and as predictably, he will reward obedience.

**Invitation:**

1. It behooves every soul to obey the form of doctrine delivered them, i.e. the Gospel, Rom. 6:17; 1:16.
2. Jesus Christ will punish disobedient souls, 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
3. However, Jesus Christ will save obedient souls, Heb. 5:9; Mark 16:16; Rev. 2:10; 1 John 1:9.

# A Time to be Born and a Time to Die

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

**Thesis:** To emphasize the ultimate visit of death in due time to all people and to encourage souls to seek the Lord while there is yet time.

## **Introduction:**

1. Just as surely as the seasons of the year change, the seasons of a person's life also come and go.
  - a. The four seasons of the year compare favorably to the stages of one's life.
  - b. The precious soul for whom we now mourn has seen the springtime of youth, the summer of manhood, the twilight years of fall and now the winter of death.
  - c. In addition to the four seasons, doubtless he has seen many of the 'times' or 'seasons' listed in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.
2. While the Bible nowhere *guarantees* a full life of many years, Psalm 90:10 notes that a normal lifespan is about 70 years.
  - a. Our dear departed loved one, then, has lived a full life by reason of the many years that God has permitted him to live on this earth.
  - b. However, irrespective of the number of years one may live on this earth, life is merely a brief moment (especially compared to eternity), Jam. 4:13-15; Job 14:1-2.

## **Body:**

- I. **According to Ecclesiastes 3:2, there is in each person's life "a time to be born and a time to die."**
  - A. Every soul born into this world marches relentlessly toward the final hour of death.
    1. By observation and from Scripture, we know that death is an appointment for which no one can be late and that everyone must keep, Heb. 9:27.
    2. Try as we would to hold on to dear life with all the resources we can throw at preserving our lives, we cannot know if we will live to see the morrow, Prov. 27:1.

3. Terribly humbling, but each of us must acknowledge the frailty of our own life, 1 Pet. 1:24.
  4. Ecclesiastes 3:2 with its reference to “a time to be born and a time to die” pictures the two extremes of each human life.
- B. Sometimes in idle conversation we jest that the only things that are certain are “death and taxes,” in reality, the only sure things are “death and judgment.”
1. Jesus Christ noted by what mankind living in our age will be judged, John 12:48.
  2. Final Judgment will compare every deed and word committed or uttered throughout our lives with the Word of God, Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10.
- C. Lives to live and judgment to follow ought to prompt serious, spiritual concern among this world’s inhabitants.
1. Each soul needs to choose to serve Almighty God, Josh. 24:15.
  2. Each soul needs to ‘work out his own salvation with fear and trembling’ at the mere thought of being eternally lost, Phil. 2:12.
  3. However, one can have “boldness” to enter in before God himself when he adopts for himself “that form of doctrine” or the Gospel, Heb. 10:19; Rom. 6:17; 1:16.
  4. It behooves mankind to “be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live,” Heb. 12:9.

## **II. Hosea 10:12 speaks of another important “time” or ‘season.’**

- A. It is always time to seek the Lord.
1. We must seek the Lord on his terms, Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21-23; 15:9.
  2. The terms on which anyone can seek the Lord are found exclusively within the pages of the Bible, Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17.
  3. The New Testament portion of the Bible reveals that we must seek the Lord through repentance, acknowledging that Jesus is the Son of God, being immersed in water for the remission of sins and remaining faithful as long as we live, Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Col. 2:12; Rev. 2:10.
- B. Today, we especially seek the Lord for comfort from bereavement.

1. Comfort originates with God from whom we learn to comfort one another, 2 Cor. 1:3-4.
  2. Each of us needs to empathize with the bereaved, Rom. 12:15.
  3. Jesus Christ himself is a prime source of inexhaustible comfort for those who come trust in him, Matt. 11:28-30.
- C. As Hosea wrote, “it is time to seek the Lord,” Hos. 10:12.
1. Yesterday is gone forever.
  2. Tomorrow may never come.
  3. Now is all that we have for sure.
  4. With Isaiah we urge, “Seek the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near,” Isa. 55:6.

**Conclusion:**

1. In due time, as our departed loved one is, so shall we be.
2. Therefore, rather than mourning long, let us each prepare to meet God, Amos 4:12.

# The Importance of Motherhood

Ephesians 6:2

**Thesis:** To emphasize the significance of and express appreciation for motherhood.

## **Introduction:**

1. Biologically, a mother is the female parent of offspring, but a good mother is much, much more than a baby machine.
2. A good mother loves her children enough to prepare them for earthly life and eternal life.

## **Body:**

- I. **The word “mother” has obvious meaning when connected with the home and family, but the Bible lifts up motherhood to an even higher plane.**
  - A. The Old Testament extols motherhood by highlighting heightened esteem toward mothers.
    1. The Old Testament commands children to direct equal respect to both fathers and mothers, Gen. 28:7; Exod. 20:12; cf. Eph. 6:2; Exod. 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18-21.
    2. Psalm 35:14 indicates that one’s grief for the death of his mother exceeds the grief caused by death of any other.
  - B. The New Testament exalts motherhood, too.
    1. The highest exaltation of motherhood can be seen in the virgin birth; “The birth of Christ lifted motherhood to the highest possible plane and idealized it for all time” (*ISBE*).
    2. The apostle Paul valued motherhood and bestowed praise on mothers, Rom. 16:13; 1 Tim. 5:2.
  - C. Mothers contribute immeasurably to the spiritual development of their children (or lack thereof).
    1. Timothy’s mother and his mother’s mother instilled reverence for God and his Word in youthful Timothy, 2 Tim. 1:5.
    2. Many contemporary mothers have thrown away their

critical role in the home respecting the upbringing of their children, e.g. sacrificing children upon the altar of a career, 1 Tim. 5:14; Prov. 31:10-31.

3. Unfortunately, some mothers do not have “natural affection” and must be taught to “love their children,” e.g. abortion, Rom. 1:31; Titus 2:4.

## **II. The word “mother” sometimes is used figuratively in the Bible.**

- A. The word “mother” can refer to a nation, Ezek. 19; Jer. 50:12-13.
- B. The word “mother” can refer to a city.
  1. For instance, one Israelite city was called “a mother in Israel,” 2 Sam. 20:19.
  2. Another city was called “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” Rev. 17:5.
  3. The apostle Paul referred to Jerusalem as “our mother,” Gal. 4:26.
- C. The word “mother” can refer to ancestry.
  1. Eve “was the mother of all [the] living,” Gen. 3:20.
  2. Sarah was “a mother of nations,” Gen. 17:16.
  3. Rebekah was called “the mother of thousands of millions,” Gen. 24:60.
- D. The word “mother,” like the word “father,” can refer to one who is responsible for converting others whereby they became babes in Christ, 1 Thess. 2:7.
- E. Jesus used the word “mother” to refer to his disciples as his closest of (spiritual) family, Matt. 12:49-50.
- F. The last earthly responsibility Jesus to which Jesus attended was providing for the welfare of his mother after his death, which indicates his high evaluation of motherhood as well as compassion for his mother, John 29:27.

## **III. The Bible chronicles in its pages some outstanding mothers.**

- A. Hannah, mother of Samuel, is an example of an outstanding mother, 1 Sam.
  1. She loved God.
  2. She prayed for a son.
  3. She dedicated her son to the lifelong service of God.
  4. She gave gifts to her son.
- B. “Mother Jezebel” is an example of an outstanding mother in the wrong way, 2 Kings 9:22.

1. Her wickedness brought idolatry into Israel.
  2. She also was guilty of murder.
  3. Jezebel's wickedness is summarized in Scripture as "whoredoms" and "witchcraft."
- C. Truly, the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world!
1. Mothers need to ask themselves what kind of mothers they are.
  2. Children need to ask themselves what kind of sons and daughters they are.

**Conclusion:**

1. A God-fearing, godly living mother is a blessing to her home, especially to her children, Prov. 31:30.
2. Fathers and mothers have the responsibility to prepare their children for life, including starting their own families, Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31.
3. Fathers and mothers have the responsibility to prepare their children for eternal life, too, 2 Tim. 1:5; Eph. 6:4.

**Invitation:**

1. Mothers need to do their part to lead their children into the faith of Jesus Christ, and children need to do their part to become and remain the faithful children of God.
2. Jesus urges all souls to become Christians and remain faithful Christians, Mark 16:16; Rev. 2:10.
3. When Christians falter in sin, they need to repent and pray for forgiveness as publicly or as privately as they sinned, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

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# It Takes a Community

Proverbs 22:6

**Thesis:** It takes a community, including the home and the church, to rear a child successfully.

## **Introduction:**

1. The phrase, “It Takes a Community,” is popular across many fields of endeavor, evidenced by typing those words into an Internet search engine and glancing through the results.
2. It is equally true that it takes a community, including the home and the church, to rear a child successfully to adulthood.
3. Especially in view of the many unhealthy influences in contemporary society that attempt to mesmerize our children, we need to recognize the hugely important roles of good parenting and the Lord’s church to successful childrearing.

## **Body:**

### **I. First, let’s define what we mean by the word “community.”**

- A. A dictionary definition of “community” provides essential information about some of what we mean when we acknowledge that it takes a community to successfully rear children.
  1. “Community” means “a unified body of individuals: as...**b**: the people with common interests living in a particular area” (*Merriam*).
  2. The concept of “community” revolves around something or someone for which different people have a common regard.
- B. Children are the focal point of common interest around which revolves the efforts of both those who contribute to successful childrearing, as well as those who detract from and make successful childrearing difficult at best.
  1. Our children are affected favorably or unfavorably at school sometimes through curriculum taught and their peers.
  2. Our children are affected favorably or unfavorably by media in all of its forms, e.g. TV, movies, music, video games, Internet.

3. Our children are affected favorably or unfavorably sometimes by home life.
  4. Our children are affected favorably or unfavorably sometimes by their religious experiences or lack of the same.
- C. Whether we like it or not, the larger community around us participates in rearing our children.
1. Therefore, parents must do everything within their power to minimize the bad societal influences and maximize the positive societal influences in children's lives.
  2. Hence, the value of proactive parents in the home cannot be overemphasized.
  3. Further, parents need to take advantage of the positive moral support system available to the home through the Lord's church.

## **II. Second, consider for a few moments the necessity of good and responsive homes to the successful rearing of our children.**

- A. God gave parents the primary role in bring up their children.
1. Children are a blessing to any home directly from God to man, Psa. 127:3.
  2. Parents do not have God's permission to neglect or refuse their God-given assignment to rear the children that they brought into this world, Prov. 22:6.
- B. Fathers have a role given to them by God, that unfortunately many men fail to realize.
1. Fathers are responsible to God for providing the spiritual upbringing of their children, Eph. 6:4.
  2. Fathers are primarily responsible for disciplining their children, however, without being too harsh, Heb. 12:7-10; Col. 3:21.
  3. Simply providing food, clothes and a place to live is not enough, though many fathers think they have accomplished their part in childrearing if they just to these things.
- C. Mothers have a role given to them by God, that unfortunately is under appreciated by many mothers today.
1. Mothers need to instill the morality of the Christian faith in their children from the time they are infants forward, 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15.

2. Mothers are primarily responsible for guiding the home and providing the nurturing nest for childrearing, 1 Tim. 5:14; Titus 2:5.
  3. While mothers may work outside the home, it is imperative that they do not forsake their responsibility in the home to their children, Prov. 31:10-31.
- D. Our society is full of examples of failed parenting where moms and dads did not take seriously enough the God-given responsibility of rearing their children.
1. Let us determine that to the best of our abilities we will not allow our children to be added to that number.
  2. Let us determine that we will be consistent in our efforts at childrearing.
  3. Let us determine that we will use the best resources to help us in successful childrearing.

**III. Third, consider for a few moments the urgency of a caring and morally responsive church family to successful rearing of our children.**

- A. The church is part of the community that can contribute in a positive way to successful childrearing.
1. Scripture speaks of the church as the “house of God,” 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17.
  2. *Strong’s Concordance and Dictionary* says of the Greek for “house”: “by implication a family” (*Biblesoft’s*).
  3. The Lord’s church is a spiritual family!
- B. The church makes several invaluable contributions to successful childrearing.
1. Bible classes and sermons bring the mind of God to the minds of children and parents alike.
  2. The church is a valuable resource on which parents can draw for childrearing, Titus 2:3-5.
  3. The church is a valuable support group to which parents can appeal in their childrearing (and other aspects of life), Gal. 6:2.
  4. The church, along with the family, have a community or common interest in childrearing, and together help to offset the bad influences from other segments of society.

**Conclusion:**

1. Whether we like it or not, the larger community around us participates in rearing our children.
2. Together the home and the church can increase the likelihood of successful childrearing.

**Invitation:**

1. However, for mom and dad to be all they can be as parents, they really need to be faithful Christians.
2. The words of Jesus tell exactly how to become a child of God, Mark 16:16.
3. The apostle John wrote how that if after one becomes a Christian he sins that his sins can be forgiven, 1 John 1:9.
4. Jesus Christ emphasized the need for Christians to be faithful, Rev. 2:10.

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# Focus on Jesus

## 1 Corinthians 11:1

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

### **Introduction:**

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

### **Body:**

- I. Focus on Jesus respecting the spiritual horizon toward which we as pilgrims make our earthly march.**
  - A. We should never take our eyes off of Jesus.**
    1. The New Testament portrays Jesus Christ as mankind's prime example, 1 Pet. 2:21.
    2. We can see Jesus in others who are following Jesus, by which we can more easily follow Jesus, 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17.
    3. In other words, we can more easily follow Jesus when the people with whom we associate the most are also following Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 15:33; Heb. 6:12.
    4. Jesus Christ is our elder brother who looks out for us, Matt. 12:49-50; 25:40; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11.
  - B. When we keep our focus on Jesus, we will adopt for ourselves as many of the character traits of Jesus that we can.**
    1. We will learn humility and meekness, Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:8; 2 Cor. 10:1.
    2. We need to develop the same degree of love Jesus has for us, Eph. 5:2.
  - C. Our lives run amok whenever we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus.**
    1. If we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus, our homes

become polluted with drugs and alcohol, immoralities, foul language, etc., Gal. 5:19-21.

2. If we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus, our marriages fall apart, Matt. 19:4-6, 9; Eph. 5:25, 28, 31.
3. If we fail to keep our eyes focused on Jesus, we are not nearly as good of employees and providers as we could be, Col. 3:22-24.
4. Our lives can never be all they could be when we take our focus off of Jesus!

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

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

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

- A. Focusing on Jesus in our worship means that we will worship God in his own appointed way.
  1. Anything other than biblically authorized worship of God is condemned in Scripture as “will worship,” Col. 2:23; Matt. 15:9.
  2. New Testament worship includes praying, the Lord’s Supper, preaching or teaching, the contribution and

singing, Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.

- B. Focusing on Jesus in Christian service means that we will always be aware that we are serving Jesus first in all that we do in this life.
1. Nothing and no one in this life deserves more attention than our service to Jesus, Matt. 6:33; 10:37.
  2. Good works should be discernible in the lives of Christians, Titus 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14.
  3. Good works demonstrates faith in God and his Word, Jam. 2:14-16.
  4. Good works glorifies God in heaven, John 15:8.

**Conclusion:**

1. Keeping one's focus on Jesus will make life better on earth and help make preparation for an eternal habitation in heaven.
2. We must focus on Jesus respecting our spiritual horizon.
3. We must focus on Jesus respecting our interpersonal interactions with fellow human beings.
4. We must focus on Jesus respecting our Christian worship and Christian service.

**Invitation:**

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

# For We Walk by Faith, Not by Sight

2 Corinthians 5:7

**Thesis:** True Christianity is based on obedience rather than what one perceives himself to be satisfactory.

## **Introduction:**

1. Mankind has often thought he knew better than God how he ought to conduct himself, Prov. 14:12; 16:25.
2. In the Old Testament, for example, Almighty God took the kingdom from King Saul and gave it to King David and his descendants, all because King Saul did not obey God, 1 Sam. 15-16.
3. Today, Jesus Christ is the Savior of those who will obey him, Heb. 5:9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
4. As the apostle Paul wrote, we are obligated to walk by faith and not by sight, 2 Cor. 5:7.

## **Body:**

- I. **To be pleasing to God, people today must walk by faith and not by sight when they worship God.**
  - A. God expects mankind today to worship him according to his instructions in the New Testament.
    1. God requires that mankind worship him “in spirit and in truth,” John 4:23-24.
    2. That worship is composed of five acts: prayer, preaching or teaching, the Lord’s Supper, the contribution and singing, Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.
    3. Anything more or less is unacceptable to God because it does not conform to divine instruction, Col. 3:17.
  - B. God has never been pleased with worship according to man’s will instead of according to God’s will.
    1. God rejected the worship of Cain because he did not worship God according to instruction, Gen. 4:3-7; Heb. 11:4.
    2. God sent fire down from heaven to devour two priests,

sons of Aaron, who ignored God's worship instructions, Lev. 10:1-2.

3. Jesus Christ in his day condemned deviations in worship, Matt. 15:9.
4. The apostle Paul condemned deviations from New Testament worship, Col. 2:23.

## II. To be pleasing to God, people today must walk by faith and not by sight by practicing New Testament doctrine (teaching).

A. Divine doctrine or teaching has often appeared to mankind to be illogical.

1. There are many things that God has required of or now requires of mankind that do not appear to be logical to us, i.e. they do not compute, 1 Cor. 1:18-21; 3:18-20.
2. From a practical consideration, what difference should it have made whether Adam and Eve ate the fruit from a certain tree in the Garden of Eden, Gen. 3:1-13? Doctrinally, it involved obedience versus disobedience.
3. From a practical consideration, what difference should it have made whether Nadab and Abihu got their fire from a campfire or from the altar of burnt offering? Doctrinally, it involved obedience versus disobedience.
4. The whole point of divine doctrine or teaching is obedience versus disobedience, whether man will obey God.

B. New Testament doctrine may not be logical to mankind, but doing what God says do in the way God says to do it is a matter of obedience versus disobedience.

1. We have no right to call Jesus Christ Lord if we will not do what he says, Luke 6:46.
2. Doctrine was intended to be passed on, 2 Tim. 2:2.

C. Consider some of the doctrines that may not make sense to us, but are surely taught in the New Testament.

1. **Baptism** may seem illogical to us (it does not compute), but the New Testament definitely teaches that it is immersion and associates it with salvation, Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.
2. Weekly observance of the **Lord's Supper** may seem illogical to us, but the New Testament teaches weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, Acts 20:7.

3. Independent local congregations served by its own elders or bishops may seem inefficient to us, but God through the inspired New Testament writers taught that we should have independent local congregations served by its own elders, Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.
4. We could make a long list of New Testament doctrines, many of which man has altered, but these suffice to demonstrate that God has not left mankind without doctrinal instruction.

### **III. Mankind's every refusal to walk by faith and not by sight has been met with rejection by and condemnation from God.**

- A. God through the apostle Paul calls changing the doctrine of Jesus Christ another gospel which is not really another Gospel, Gal. 1:6-9.
- B. The apostle John warned Christians to receive no other doctrine or those who corrupt the doctrine of Jesus Christ, 2 John 9-11.
- C. Jesus Christ said that we must not add to nor take from the Word of God, Rev. 22:18-19.
- D. Jesus Christ will deny a place in heaven to those who though they profess to follow him have rather acted according to human rather than divine will, Matt. 7:21-23; John 12:48.

#### **Conclusion:**

1. In summary, mankind must determine to walk by faith and not by sight, 2 Cor. 5:7.
2. True faith comes biblical evidence, Rom. 10:17.
3. We must appeal exclusively to what is written in the Word of God, 1 Cor. 4:6 ASV.
4. Scripture came from God to man and is God-breathed, 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

#### **Invitation:**

1. Since no new revelation since the completion of the New Testament is coming from God to man, we must appeal for religious instruction exclusively to the Word of God (Bible), Jude 3; Rom. 6:17.
2. For salvation from sin, Jesus said believe and be baptized, Mark 16:16.
3. Christians also can receive forgiveness for their sins, not by being baptized again, but through repentance and prayer, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

# Jesus Knows

John 2:23-25

**Thesis:** To encourage Christians and non-Christians alike to be on their best behavior in godly living and faithful service to God, especially since Jesus Christ knows us intimately like no other knows us.

## **Introduction:**

1. Christians and non-Christians alike need to be on their best behavior in godly living and faithful service to God, especially since Jesus Christ knows us intimately like no other knows us.
2. Children and adults typically exhibit better behavior when they know that someone is watching them, when that someone commands their respect or can exact punitive measures.
  - a. Children sometimes look to see if mom or dad, a teacher, a shopkeeper or a policeman is watching them before they do something they are not supposed to do.
  - b. Employees often work more efficiently or at least don't pilfer company property when the supervisor or boss is watching.
  - c. Police presence dissuades people from criminal activity and speeding down the highways.
3. Aware that Jesus knows all (everything past, present, future and each of us, too), we ought to be on our best spiritual behavior.
4. Jesus knows all, and Jesus is watching each of you—and me.

## **Body:**

### **I. Jesus knows the Father.**

- A. “While on earth the supernatural knowledge of Jesus was manifested in His knowledge of the Father” (Nichols 25).
- B. Jesus Christ knew the Father because the Father had sent Jesus into the world, John 7:29.
- C. Knowing the Father intimately, Jesus was able to show the Father to mankind, who otherwise could not know the Father, Matt. 11:27; John 8:38.
- D. The knowledge and wisdom of Jesus Christ was noticeably superior to mere human knowledge and wisdom, Matt. 13:54.

## **II. Jesus knows the past.**

- A. The personal knowledge of Jesus Christ predates Abraham, John 8:58.
- B. Jesus had an intimate relationship with Moses and Elijah that he could effortlessly converse with them, Matt. 17:1-5.
- C. Jesus amazed Nathaniel by displaying knowledge of an event in his past, John 1:48.
- D. Jesus Christ astonished the Samaritan woman at the well by exhibiting knowledge that she had been married four times and that she was an adulteress with the man with whom she was living then, John 4:16-18.
- E. Jesus knows the past, including your past and mine!

## **III. Jesus knows the present.**

- A. Jesus forcefully told people contemporary with him in his earthly ministry: “But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you,” John 5:42.
- B. Jesus knew where there was a large school of fish, all without the help of some modern contraption called an electronic fish finder, Luke 5:4-7.
- C. Jesus Christ knows those who are his faithful disciples—and those who are not, 2 Tim. 2:19.
- D. Consequently, Jesus only hears the prayers of the righteous, 1 Pet. 3:12.

## **IV. Jesus knows the future.**

- A. Jesus knew that a certain man would permit his disciples and him to use an upper room for observance of the Passover and institution of the Lord’s Supper, Luke 22:10-12.
- B. Jesus knew that Peter would catch a fish in the mouth of which was sufficient money to pay taxes for Jesus and Peter, Matt. 17:27.
- C. Jesus foreknew that he would be betrayed by one of his twelve disciples (Judas), John 6:64, 70-71; 13:11.
- D. Jesus knew that Peter would deny him three times before a rooster crowed, Matt. 26:34, 75.
- E. Jesus knew that the apostle John would live to be an old man, though some of the other apostles and disciples plus Jesus Christ himself suffered persecutions resulting in their deaths, Matt. 27:50; John 19:33; Acts 7:58-60; 12:1-2.
- F. The prophecies of Jesus Christ that came to pass are many more than these few cited here.

G. “Each predictive prophecy demonstrates that Jesus knows the future!” (Nichols 25).

**V. Jesus knows our hearts, John 2:23-25.**

- A. Jesus Christ searches the hearts of men, Rev. 2:23; Mark 2:8.
- B. Jesus Christ was able to look into the hearts of his twelve disciples as they wrangled among themselves who would be the greatest in the kingdom, Luke 9:46-48.
- C. Consequently, Jesus Christ knows when you or I have evil in our hearts, Matt. 9:4.
- D. Certainly not our deeds or works and not even our thoughts are hidden from Jesus Christ, Matt. 12:25; Luke 6:8; 11:16-17.
- E. Jesus is watching our behavior, and he is monitoring our thoughts, too!

**Conclusion:**

- 1. The supernatural knowledge of Jesus Christ is apparent.
- 2. The supernatural knowledge of Jesus Christ includes intimate knowledge of each of you—and me.
- 3. Essentially, Jesus is watching!
- 4. That should inspire each of us to be on our best spiritual behavior—in godly living and Christian service.

Awareness that Jesus knows us “through and through” is a powerful stimulus to motivate us, collectively, and as individuals, to lovingly and sincerely “walk in the light” (I John 1:7) so that we constantly will have Christ’s approval. How can any child of God be unfaithful to Christ, while he recognizes-and fully believes!-that Jesus knows what is in man? (Nichols 26)

- 5. Borrowing language from 2 Pet. 3:11, with the apostle Peter, we exhort: “Seeing then all these things...what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [conduct NKJV] and godliness.”

**Invitation:**

- 1. With the apostle Paul, we urge: “The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity,” 2 Tim. 2:19.
- 2. Initially, one departs from “iniquity” or sin by becoming a child of God, a Christian, 1 Pet. 3:21; 4:16.
- 3. A Christian departs from “iniquity” or sin by walking in the Christian light and repenting of sin on those occasions when our

Christian walk is marred by sin, 1 John 1:7, 9.

4. What does Jesus know about you; are you in a saved condition, or are you lost right now?
5. Jesus knows our hearts and our works, Acts 1:24; Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15.

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# The Impact of Faith

James 2:19

**Thesis:** To emphasize that in order for a professed faith in Jesus Christ to actually mean something, it has to have a direct impact on the way we conduct ourselves.

## **Introduction:**

1. What is the impact of your faith on you personally as a Christian?
2. In order for a professed faith in Jesus Christ to actually mean something, it has to have a direct impact on the way we conduct ourselves.

## **Body:**

- I. **In what ways is it evident that one's faith in Jesus Christ has a direct impact on him?**
  - A. Faith in Jesus Christ has a direct impact on us when we obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ and become Christians.
    1. Faith that does not lead one to become a child of God on his terms is a faith that is no more valuable than the faith of "devils" (KJV) or "demons" (ASV, NKJV), Jam. 2:19.
    2. If faith in Jesus Christ has the proper impact on us, we will couple that faith with baptism and be saved, Mark 16:16.
    3. Baptized believers are added to the church by Jesus Christ, Acts 2:38, 41, 47.
    4. Members of the church were first called Christians in Antioch of Syria, Acts 11:26.
  - B. Faith in Jesus Christ has a direct impact on us when we are aware of our allegiance to our Lord every waking moment.
    1. There is no time during our waking moments that we as Christians should not think pure thoughts, Phil. 4:8.
    2. There is no time during our waking moments that we should not speak like Christians, Eph. 4:25; 5:12.
    3. There is no time during our waking moments that we should not act like Christians, Eph. 5:8.
  - C. Faith in Jesus Christ has a direct impact on us when we manage our interpersonal relationships in accordance with

that system of faith, the Gospel.

1. The faith in Jesus Christ that led us to become Christians should also lead us to be good spouses and parents, Eph. 5:24-25; 6:4; Titus 2:4-5.
  2. The faith in Jesus Christ that led us to become Christians should also lead us to be good employees and employers, Eph. 6:5-9.
  3. The faith in Jesus Christ that led us to become Christians should also lead us to be good citizens, 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-14, 17.
- D. Faith in Jesus Christ has a direct impact on us when we scrutinize every activity in which we involve ourselves by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
1. The faith we have in Jesus Christ ought to keep us from developing a close friendship with ungodly people, 1 Cor. 15:33 ASV; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.
  2. For instance, we will not eventually marry an ungodly person if we make it a practice not to date or have close social interactions with ungodly persons.
  3. The faith we have in Jesus Christ ought to cause us to evaluate potential recreation and entertainment choices properly in light of the Word of God, Heb. 11:25; 1 John 2:15-17.
  4. Activities that may be biblically permissible may be inappropriate for Christians depending upon when and where they occur, such as fishing or golfing instead of assembling with fellow Christians to worship God in his own appointed way, Heb. 10:25-31.
  5. The faith we have in Jesus Christ ought to lead us to select as carefully as possible the jobs at which we work to avoid promoting ungodliness or preventing us from worshipping God in the public assembly.
  6. Circumstances such as available work opportunities may be less than ideal, but we must find some time to worship (as well as serve) our God to be Christians indeed.

## **II. In what ways is it evident that one's faith in Jesus Christ does not have a direct impact on him?**

- A. Faith in Jesus Christ does not have a direct impact on us when that faith does not leave the church house.

1. Our faith in Jesus Christ is useless if it is not evident in our daily lives—at home, at work, at school, in our business dealings, in our citizenship, etc..
  2. Those with whom we come in contact throughout the days, weeks, months and years we spend on planet earth ought to be able to ascertain that we look “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).
- B. Faith in Jesus Christ does not have a direct impact on us when that faith does not help make this world a better place in which to live.
1. We can help this world to be a better place in which to live as we conduct ourselves like Christians we also provide an example for others to imitate us, 1 Thess. 1:6-7; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:1.
  2. As Christians and the Lord’s church, we should not rub elbows with sin, but rather oppose sin, Rom. 1:32; Eph. 5:11.
  3. Where gambling, pornography, drinking, dancing, lewd activities, vulgarities are ought not to be the haunt of Christians.
- C. Faith in Jesus Christ does not have a direct impact on us when we do not glorify God.
1. Obviously, we can glorify God verbally through statements we make, prayer and song, Acts 4:24; Heb. 13:15; Psa. 69:30.
  2. We can also glorify God by the way in which we live our lives, or we can spite God and bring reproach upon him by the way we live (especially if we profess to be Christians), 1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12.
- D. Faith in Jesus Christ does not have a direct impact on us when we do not save souls, including our own.
1. Faith in Jesus Christ is inconsequential to us when we are so little concerned about sin that mars our souls and that will prevent us from going to heaven, Acts 26:28.
  2. We need to ask ourselves if we really care about where we spend eternity—enough to do something about it.
  3. Faith in Jesus Christ is inconsequential to us when we are so little concerned about sin that we make little or

no attempt to rescue the souls of others from a devil's hell, Jam. 5:20.

4. We need to ask ourselves if we really care if our family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. spend forever in hell.
- E. Faith in Jesus Christ does not have a direct impact on us when we are not true to the Book—the Bible, the only book learning that is important enough to take us to heaven.
1. When we pick and choose portions of Scripture to apply in our lives, we are fooling ourselves if we think that is a winning strategy that will take us to heaven, Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46.
  2. When we substitute doctrines of men in place of the doctrines of God (even if we abide by many of God's doctrines), we make it apparent that we neither have sufficient regard for the Bible nor have the right kind of faith in Jesus Christ, Matt. 15:9; Titus 1:14; Heb. 13:9.

**Conclusion:**

1. In what ways is it evident that your faith in Jesus Christ has a direct impact on your life?
2. Are there ways in which it is obvious that faith in Jesus Christ does not have a direct impact on your life?

**Invitation:**

1. What is the impact of faith on you personally?
2. Has your faith led you to become a Christian, Mark 16:16?
3. Has your faith led you to be a faithful Christian, 1 John 1:7, 9?

# In Appreciation of Fathers

Genesis 18:19

**Thesis:** Being a good father involves much more than procreation.

## **Introduction:**

1. A father is no more a good father than is a mother a good mother merely because of their participation in procreation.
2. Good mothers as well as good fathers are much more.
3. Good fathers, like good mothers, need to be praised as well as reminded of their role respecting their children.

## **Body:**

### **I. The father under ordinary circumstances is primarily responsible for sustaining the home physically.**

- A. Whoever refuses or neglects to provide physically for his own family “is worse than an infidel” (KJV) or “unbeliever” (ASV, NKJV), 1 Tim. 5:8.
- B. Typically, children know they can turn to responsive fathers and rely upon them, Luke 11:11-13.
- C. Fathers need to provide for their children food, clothing, shelter, etc., but godly fathers have responsibilities toward their children beyond the necessities of this life.

### **II. The father also is responsible for sustaining the home spiritually.**

- A. God holds fathers responsible for the spiritual education of their children, Eph. 6:4.
- B. Abraham was such a father who took seriously the responsibility to instill the faith of God in his children, Gen. 18:19.
- C. Likewise under the Judaism, fathers were to seize every opportunity to instill the faith of God in their children, Deut. 6:4-9; 11:18-20.
- D. Children need to be taught from infancy onward, Josh. 8:32-35; 2 Tim. 3:15.
- E. Fathers also must properly discipline their children comparable as our heavenly Father disciplines his children so they will be what they ought to be, Heb. 12:5-11; Prov. 13:24 NKJV; 23:13-14.

### III. Notice some biblical portraits of fathers.

- A. Some fathers made obvious mistakes (sinned): Noah, Gen. 9:21; Lot, Gen. 19:33-38.
- B. Consider a prime example of a good father and an obedient son: Abraham and Isaac, Gen. 22:7-19.
- C. Paul and Timothy are a spiritual father and son team, 1 Tim. 1:2.
- D. A father may be blameworthy for the sinful lives of his children as Eli was, 1 Sam. 3:13.
- E. We have an example also of a father who was **not** responsible for the sinfulness of his children: Samuel 1 Sam. 8:1-5.
- F. Good fathers love their sons in spite of their sons' wickedness: David & Absalom, 2 Sam. 18:31-33; the Prodigal Son and his father, Luke 15:11-24.
- G. Jephthah is an example of a rash father, Jud. 11:30-39.
- H. Our heavenly Father is an example of a father who chastises his son because he loves him, Heb. 12:5-11.

#### Conclusion:

1. Good fathers deserve to be praised and honored.
2. Father's Day is one way we do that in our secular world.
3. Fathers, be all that you can be because God has given you an important role regarding both the physical and spiritual needs of your children.

#### What Is A Home?

A roof to keep out the rain. Four walls to keep out the wind. Floors to keep out the cold. Yes, but home is more than that. It is a laugh of a baby, the song of a mother, the strength of a father. Warmth of loving hearts, light from happy eyes, kindness, loyalty, comradeship. Home is the first school of young ones, where they learn what is good, what is right and what is kind. That is a home, May God Bless It! (Anonymous)

#### Invitation:

1. Our heavenly Father takes care of us physically and spiritually, Matt. 5:45; John 3:16-17.
2. Like our children must favorably respond to our efforts toward them, we must respond favorably toward our heavenly Father to obtain salvation initially and remain in a saved condition, Mark 16:16; 1 John 1:9.

# Savior of All Men

## 1 Timothy 4:10

**Thesis:** To distinguish between God's willingness for all humanity to be saved and those who are actually saved.

**Song:** *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us.*

### **Introduction:**

1. God has always demonstrated his willingness for mankind to be saved from sin and its consequences.
2. The plan of God to save mankind from sin predated the first sin by mortals in the Garden of Eden, Gen. 3:1-6; Eph. 3:9-11; Titus 1:2.
3. Gradually over 4,000 years, God acquainted mankind with his ultimate plan to redeem sin-laden, fallen mankind, Eph. 3:3-11.
  - a. God began to educate mankind about the real cost of sin and redemption through the animal sacrifices under Patriarchy and Judaism, Gen. 4:4; Heb. 10:1, 11-12.
  - b. Jesus Christ is the ultimate sacrifice for sin, not only accomplishing atonement of sins, but forgiveness of sin, John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:28.
4. The forever benevolent disposition of God toward sinful humanity appears clearly in the prophet Ezekiel's representation of the mind of God toward wayward Israelites under Judaism, Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11.

### **Body:**

#### **I. God is the Savior of all men.**

- A. God does not want anyone to be lost.
  1. Each soul that knows the difference between right and wrong is accountable for his or her sins, Rom. 3:10, 23.
  2. There is, though, an awful penalty for sin, Rom. 6:23; Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Jam. 1:15; Rev. 21:8.
  3. However, the fact that God does not desire any soul to be lost will not prevent him from punishing the ungodly, 2 Pet. 3:9-10; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Heb. 10:25-31.
  4. Most assuredly, souls will be lost following Final Judgment, John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:12-15.
- B. God, especially through Jesus Christ, has made it possible

for all humanity to be saved from sin and its consequences.

1. All humanity is the object of God's provision for salvation, 1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2; 4:14.
  2. The Gospel reverberates with the message that God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world the first time because it was already lost and so that it could possibly be saved, John 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 1:15.
  3. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross is the special provision of God for the redemption of humanity, John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:18-20.
- C. Despite God's willingness to save all mankind, some souls will be lost.
1. Frankly, more souls will be lost than will be saved, Matt. 7:13-14.
  2. Happily, though, innumerable souls will be saved, Rev. 7:9.

## **II. God is the Savior of true believers.**

- A. God has implemented extraordinary measures so that no one has to be lost.
1. Why God created mankind when through his foreknowledge he knew we would be rebellious causes one to wonder in awe with no satisfactory answer.
  2. More incredibly, knowing mankind would steep himself in sin so that a holy God could not have fellowship with us, God both created mankind and prepared extraordinary measures for his redemption from sin, Titus 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:18-25.
  3. However, God also foreknew that some of his human creation would respond to his Holy Word and be redeemed, Rom. 8:29; 11:1-5; 1 Pet. 1:2.
- B. God, through Jesus Christ, has saved true believers from sin and its consequences.
1. Jesus Christ, the Holy Son of God, dying on the cross of Calvary as though he were a spotless lamb sacrifice is the extraordinary measure of God to save all sinners.
  2. However, that salvation or redemption is not unconditional—only true believers actually receive the benefits of Christ's sacrifice, 1 Tim. 4:10; cf. Gal. 6:10.

[Specially of those that believe] This is evidently designed to limit the previous remark. If it had been left there, it might have been inferred that he would “actually save” all people. But the apostle held no such doctrine, and he here teaches that salvation is “actually” limited to those who believe. This is the speciality or the uniqueness in the salvation of those who actually reach heaven, that they are “believers”... All people, therefore, do not enter heaven, unless all people have faith. But is this so? What evidence is there that the great mass of mankind die believing on the Son of God? (Barnes)

[Who is the Saviour of all men] Who has provided salvation for the whole human race, and has freely offered it to them in his word and by his Spirit. [Specially of those that believe.] What God intends for ALL, he actually gives to them that believe in Christ, who died for the sins of the world, and tasted death for every man. As all have been purchased by his blood so all may believe; and consequently all may be saved. Those that perish, perish through their own fault. (Clarke)

3. Though God desires all mankind to be saved and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is effective potentially toward that end, only true believers in Jesus Christ as the Son of God reap the benefits of our Lord’s sacrifice, John 5:24; 1 John 5:10-13.
- C. True believers implement the Word of God (the Gospel) in their lives, including immersion in water for the remission of sins.
1. No Scripture better demonstrates the necessity of follow-through regarding one’s professed faith than Jam. 2:14-26.
  2. No Scripture better explains the follow-through of faith that leads to salvation than Mark 16:16.
  3. Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God also leads true believers to repent of their sins and openly acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, Acts 2:38; 8:36-37.

- D. Despite God's willingness to save all mankind, even many children of God will be eternally lost.
1. Our Lord's Parable of Soils indicates that not only will a mere 25% of those to whom the Gospel is preached will finally be saved. Matt. 13:3-23.
  2. Further, of those who obey the Gospel, only a third will persevere to the end and be saved eternally, Rev. 2:10.

**Conclusion:**

1. Jesus Christ is the only "Savior of the world," John 4:42.
2. "It is a fact, of course, that God is able and willing to save all men, and that all who are ever saved will be saved by him; and it is in this sense that 'he is the Saviour of all men'" (Coffman).
3. Regarding 2 Peter 3:9, Robertson noted: "Some will perish (2 Peter 3:7), but that is not God's desire."
4. God forbears with humanity, delaying Final Judgment so that more souls may take advantage of the salvation that he, through Jesus Christ, has provided to mankind, Rom. 2:4.

**Invitation:**

1. The prophet Isaiah wrote these words of God respecting his willingness to save sinful men: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else," Isa 45:22.
2. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ summarized precisely how people living today can avail themselves of the salvation God desires them to have, Mark 16:16.
3. The apostle John wrote to Christians how they could remove sins in their lives, 1 John 1:9.

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# Prophet, Priest and King

Hebrews 4:14

**Thesis:** To examine the unique, three-faceted role of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest and King ascribed to him in Scripture.

**Song:** *He's My King; I Walk with the King; Praise Him, Praise Him*

## Introduction:

1. Jesus Christ is the anti-type of Melchisedec who was king and priest of Salem (Jerusalem), Heb. 7:1-11.
2. Jesus Christ is the anti-type of Samuel who was prophet, judge and priest, 1 Sam. 3:1-20; 7:6, 9-10, 15.
3. Only in Jesus Christ do the functions of Prophet, Priest and King merge (as well as Judge).

## Body:

### I. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Prophet.

- A. Jesus Christ represented himself to be a Prophet, Matt. 13:57; John 4:44.
- B. Others recognized Jesus Christ as a Prophet, Matt. 21:11; John 4:19; 9:17.
- C. Jesus Christ was recognized to be “that prophet”—the Greatest Prophet—about whom Moses prophesied, John 6:14; Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-23.
- D. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Prophet because he towers over the former prophets and God spoke through him in the Last Days, Heb. 1:1-2.
- E. As the Greatest Prophet, Jesus Christ brought to this earth the Gospel of Christ whereby souls can be saved, John 1:17; Rom. 1:16.

### II. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Priest.

- A. *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* beautifully summarizes the priestly work of Jesus Christ.

Here on earth our Lord was a priest in a preeminent sense, both in His sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world and in His intercession. He is also our present High Priest, interceding for us in heaven. Jesus' baptism in Jordan was evidently a divine setting-apart of the Messiah for His threefold office of Prophet,

Priest, and King, especially as a priest, for therein was the essence of His work manifested in human redemption. (*New Unger's*)

- B. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Priest because he is the Greatest High Priest, Heb. 3:1-6.
- C. Jesus Christ is the Greatest High Priest because he functions in heaven itself, Heb. 4:14; 8:1.
- D. Jesus Christ is the Greatest High Priest because he ministers in the heavenly tabernacle, Heb. 8:1-3; 9:11.
- E. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Priest because he was called to be Priest by God himself, Heb. 5:5, 10.
- F. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Priest because his priesthood is not interrupted by death, Heb. 7:23-24.
- G. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Priest because his priesthood is eternal, Heb. 6:20; 7:25.

### **III. Jesus Christ is the Greatest King.**

- A. The Greatest King was to come through the lineage of King David, 2 Sam. 7:16.
- B. Jesus Christ, the Greatest King, was “born King of the Jews,” Matt. 2:2.
- C. “The angel Gabriel” informed Mary, mother of Jesus, that her Son would fulfill the Old Testament prophecy regarding David’s throne and the eternal kingdom, Luke 1:26-33.
- D. However, the nation of Israel to whom the Greatest King came initially hated him, Mark 15:12-13; Luke 19:14.
- E. Consequently, Jesus Christ died as King, Matt. 27:37.
- F. Yet, Jesus Christ is triumphant over death and is “King of kings and Lord of lords,” Rev. 19:16.
- G. Therefore, Christians worship Jesus Christ as the Greatest King, 1 Tim. 1:17.
- H. Jesus Christ will remain Greatest King as long as this earth lasts, finally surrendering his kingdom to the Heavenly Father, Isa. 9:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

### **Conclusion:**

1. The unique role of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest and King makes it possible to make necessary preparation to meet Jesus Christ as Judge also.
2. Jesus Christ is the Greatest Prophet, Priest and King, in all of which roles our Lord labors to bring us into heaven forever.

**Invitation:**

1. If we refuse or neglect to allow Jesus Christ to be Prophet, Priest and King of our lives, to our dismay we will know Jesus Christ as vengeful Judge, Heb. 10:30-31.
2. When one is willing to allow Jesus Christ to be the King of his life, he will do what he says, Luke 6:46; Mark 16:16.
3. When Christians allow Jesus Christ to be the King of their lives, they are faithful Christians and “zealous of good works,” 1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14.

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(This resource provided the thought and format for this lesson.)

# God Is

John 4:24

**Thesis:** To walk around God, as though that were possible, and view him from various angles.

**Song:** *God Is Love; Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

## **Introduction:**

1. Imagine for a moment that we could be literally in the vicinity of God.
2. Further imagine that it were possible to walk around him to view God from various angles.
3. What could we discern about God?
4. Of course, we cannot walk around God literally, but we can examine God through the vehicle of the Word of God—the Bible.
5. Thereby, we can ascertain that God is Spirit, changeless, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere, eternal, holy, righteous, love, truth, wisdom and faithful.

## **Body:**

### **I. God is Spirit.**

- A. Jesus affirmed that God is wholly a Spirit Being, John 4:24.
- B. That means God has neither physical form nor is visible.
- C. The Son of God was visible only because of his fleshly incarnation through the vehicle of the Virgin Birth, John 1:1, 14.

### **II. God is changeless.**

- A. God is the same though his interaction with mankind may be progressive, e.g. Patriarchy, Judaism and Christianity, Heb. 1:12.
- B. Consequently, because Jesus Christ is deity, too, the divine character of Jesus is changeless, though his interaction with mankind may be progressive, e.g. incarnation, Heb. 13:8.

### **III. God is all-powerful.**

- A. “God’s power is unlimited. He can do anything that is not inconsistent with His nature, character, and purpose (Gen 17:1; 18:14). The only limitations on God’s power are imposed by Himself (Gen 18:25)” (*Nelson’s*).
- B. God made the worlds and by the same power the worlds

continue to exist (and all the universe, too), Col. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9.

#### **IV. God is all-knowing.**

- A. No one knows more than God, for instance, as though someone could counsel God, Rom. 11:33-34.
- B. Mankind does not know as much as God, despite thorough honest scientific evaluation; man regularly discovers new truths to him in this physical world.
- C. God's knowledge is as infinite as he is in every way, Psa. 147:5.

#### **V. God is everywhere.**

- A. David acknowledged that there is nowhere in the universe to which he or anyone could resort that would be beyond the presence of God, Psa. 139:7-12.
- B. God said of himself that he fills heaven and earth, Jer. 23:23-24.

#### **VI. God is eternal.**

- A. Past, present and future that we call time has no relationship to God, 2 Pet. 3:8.
- B. David noted that a 1,000 years was no more extensive to God than the normal soldier's watch of four hours would be to him, Psa. 90:4.
- C. "Time is like a parade that man sees only a segment at a time. But God sees time in its entirety" (*Nelson's*).
- D. God is "forever and ever," Heb. 1:8.

#### **VII. God is holy.**

- A. The prophet Isaiah saw in a vision special angelic creatures in heaven crying aloud "holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts," Isa. 6:1-3.
- B. The people of God are to imitate the holiness of God, Heb. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2:5, 9.

#### **VIII. God is righteous.**

- A. As God, God gets to determine what constitutes righteousness, to instruct mankind accordingly, to reward obedience and to punish unrighteousness, Rom. 1:16-17; 3:24-26; 6:16.
- B. Mankind does a grave and eternal disservice to himself whenever he fails to adopt the righteousness of God or goes about to establish his own empty standard of righteousness, Rom. 10:3.

- C. Sinners and saints must “awake to righteousness and sin not,” 1 Cor. 15:34.

**IX. God is love.**

- A. Scripture plainly declares that “God is love,” 1 John 4:8, 16.
- B. “Divine love runs like a golden thread through the entire Bible” (*Nelson’s*) and is evident from every benevolent gesture of God toward man from the Garden of Eden to final redemption, Gen. 1:26-31; Eph. 3:3-11.

**X. God is truth.**

- A. Simply, “God is true,” 2 Cor. 1:18.
- B. Without God to set the standard of right and wrong, true and false, there is no truth, Rom. 1:25; 15:8; John 14:6, 17; 2 Cor. 11:10; 1 John 5:6.
- C. Consequently, the second person of the Godhead personally brought the truth that really matters to earth, John 1:17; 18:37; Gal. 2:5; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:15.
- D. This truth can make a soul free from sin, John 8:32; 17:19; Rom. 2:8.
- E. We all need “words of truth and soberness,” Acts 26:25.

**XI. God is wisdom.**

- A. God is infinitely wiser than mankind, 1 Cor. 1:25.

God’s wisdom is revealed in His doing the best thing, in the best way, at the best time for the best purpose. Some people have knowledge, but little wisdom, while the most wise at times have little knowledge. But God is “the only wise God” (1 Tim 1:17). In creation, history, human lives, redemption, and Christ, His divine wisdom is revealed. (*Nelson’s*)

- B. Like Solomon or the Christians of whom James wrote, all we need to do is request wisdom of God (and follow through in our conduct), 1 Kings 3:9; Jam. 1:5.

**XII. God is faithful.**

- A. God is reliable or faithful to whom we can turn with confidence that he has our best spiritual and eternal interest at heart, 1 Cor. 1:9.
- B. God is faithful in that he will not allow mankind to be tempted beyond his ability to resist, 1 Cor. 10:13.
- C. God is faithful to forgive penitent man his sins, 1 John 1:9.

**Conclusion:**

1. The Bible reveals the existence of God and the nature of God.
2. Therefore, mankind can know God from the Bible.
3. Finally in eternity, each soul will know God more fully, but for now we must content ourselves with Bible knowledge of God.
4. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* categorizes the characteristics of God that we have examined into natural attributes and moral attributes.
5. Natural attributes include: Spirit, changeless, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere and eternal.
6. Moral attributes include: holy, righteous, love, truth and wisdom.

**Invitation:**

1. Humanity imitates the moral attributes of God by obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ and becoming Christians, Rom. 1:16; 6:17; Acts 11:26.
2. Sinners need to become holy, righteous, practice love, tell the truth, resort to divine wisdom and be faithful, 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 13:8; Eph. 4:25; 1 Cor. 1:21, 24; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10.
3. Christians must conduct themselves as holy, righteous, in love, in truth and wisely, Rev. 22:11; Eph. 5:2; Col. 4:5.

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# Buy the Truth and Sell It Not

Proverbs 23:23

**Thesis:** To emphasize the essentiality of embracing biblical truth at all costs.

## **Introduction:**

1. All truth is important, but no truth is more important to one's happiness on earth as well as eternally in heaven than biblical truth.
2. Biblical truth is divine in origin.
3. No cost or effort is too great to know biblical truth, and no cost is too extreme to retain biblical truth.
4. Hence, by inspiration, Solomon wrote the famous words of Prov. 23:23.
  - a. Divine truth is the goal.
  - b. This divine truth depends upon divine wisdom gleaned from divine instruction that leads to proper understanding of divine truth.

Prov 23:23 We must not sell it. Do not part with it for pleasures, honours, riches, any things in this world. Do not neglect the study of it, nor throw off the profession of it, nor revolt from under the dominion of it, for the getting or saving of any secular interest whatsoever. (Henry)

“Truth,” spoken of in this verse as “wisdom, and instruction, and understanding, ” is something to obtain at all costs and something not to part with regardless of what earthly or momentary gains one may get by doing so. (Hunt 308)

5. I am indebted to Winfred Clark for the three main headings of this lesson; other resources that proved helpful in assembling this material are cited accordingly.

## Body:

### I. Divine truth is available.

A. Divine truth is as available as copies of the Bible are available.

1. Divine truth is “the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,” Eph. 1:13.

Not only is the truth attainable but we must secure it and never let it go. Truth is more important in the spiritual realm than in any other because the soul and eternity are under consideration. In view of its eternal value for us and everyone we can influence, we must buy the truth and sell it not no matter what the cost. (Hall 137)

2. Nearly every motel room, every public library and most homes have copies of the Bible available.
3. Dollar stores throughout our nations often offer copies of the Bible for less than it costs to buy a soft drink.
4. Divine truth is available in our country and in many countries throughout the world in our time.

B. Divine truth is the subject matter of teaching and preaching that Christians do.

1. We are to speak “the truth in love,” Eph. 4:15.
2. The Lord’s church is described in Scripture as “the pillar and ground of the truth,” 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 3:10.
3. The psalmist described truth as a banner that the children of God “display,” Psa. 60:4.

The man who loves the truth, who is willing to buy it and sell it not, stands out foursquare against anything and everything that is contrary to the word of God. (Hardeman 42)

C. Truth is essential also to worship and Christian living acceptable to God.

1. Christians “must worship in spirit and in truth,” John 4:24.
2. Truth that does not guide one to worship God in his own appointed way either is not divine truth or if it is divine truth it has not been fully embraced as one’s own.
3. Truth that does not lead one to live a virtuous life is

not divine truth or if it is divine truth it has not been fully embraced as one's own.

## II. Divine truth is discernible.

- A. Divine truth can be understood.
  - 1. Anyone who will handle “aright the word of truth” will understand it, 2 Tim. 2:15 ASV.
  - 2. The apostle Paul affirmed that we can “believe and know the truth,” 1 Tim. 4:3.
  - 3. Consequently, Christians are supposed to walk “in truth,” 2 John 4.
- B. There is no excuse for not believing and obeying the truth.
  - 1. The unrighteous “perish because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved” and “that they all might be damned [condemned, NKJV] who believed not the truth,” 2 Thess. 2:10, 12.
  - 2. Many souls appear to be “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,” 2 Tim. 3:7.

Loving and respecting the truth means that we will obey it. Truth is not a mere abstract concept that one would agree with or reject at leisure, but one is to love the truth to the point that he accepts it. (Laws 30)
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- C. When we know truth, we can know somewhat of the Godhead.
  - 1. God the Father is the origin of all truth, which is the reason that he must be worshiped in truth, 2 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 3:7; John 4:24.
  - 2. The Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of truth,” John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13.
  - 3. Jesus Christ, likewise, is all about truth, which he brought to earth, John 1:17.

## III. Divine truth is powerful.

- A. Embracing divine truth saves souls.
  - 1. Divine truth makes us free from sins, John 8:32.
  - 2. Christians are those who God “brought forth by the word of truth,” Jam. 1:18.
  - 3. Christians “have purified” their “souls in obeying the truth” or “Word of God,” which is “the Gospel,” 1 Pet. 1:22-23, 25.
  - 4. Truly embracing divine truth is life changing.

Buying the truth means to acquire the revealed truth of God's will in such a personal way that it has life transforming consequences (Romans 12:1-2). ...Doing truth must naturally follow knowing truth to be acceptable to the Godhead. ...There is no substitute for truth!...It costs us our lives when we buy into following Him Who is the truth (Luke 14:16-33). The cost is great, but the reward is eternal and multiplied beyond measure (1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). (Clarke)

- B. Failure to embrace divine truth or turning from it results in lost souls.
  - 1. The majority of men "resist the truth," 2 Tim. 3:8.
  - 2. Unfortunately, some Christians "turn from the truth," Titus 1:14.
- C. However, acquisition of divine truth costs something.
  - 1. The vary idea of buying relative to truth in Prov. 23:23 indicates there is cost involved in acquiring divine truth.
  - 2. The cost of acquiring divine truth is great.

Obedience to the truth may cost us some friendships (*James* 4:4). Obedience to the truth may cost us our relationship with some family members (*Matt. 10:33-38*). Obedience to the truth may cost us our lives (*2 Timothy* 4:6). In fact, the minimum payment allowed is the dedication of our entire lives as a living sacrifice to God (*Rom. 12:1*). Because of the great cost involved, some people will not buy the truth. Others may buy the truth but later decide they cannot afford to make the payments so they will quickly sell. Solomon said, "buy the truth and sell it not." The truth is that which can sanctify us and in so doing save us (*John 17:17; Rom. 1:16*). For this reason the truth is a bargain at any price. Study it, know it, love it, live it, teach it, and never sell it! (Rutherford 1)

"Buy *the truth and sell it not.*" (Prov. 23:23) Do not inquire the price. Buy truth at any price and sell it at no

price. Give up house, lands, friends, parents or family, but do not give up the truth. (Brannan 277)

Everyone would do well to learn while young the inestimable value of truth. The truth, and only the truth, can make one free (John 8:32). In counseling his pupil to buy the truth, the wise man was implying cost. It will invariably cost everyone something to have the truth in their lives. It costs time and effort (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15). It may cost one the religion of his fathers (cf. Matt. 15:3-9; Gal. 1:13-16). It may even cost someone his livelihood or hobby (cf. Acts 8:9-13), but, whatever the cost, whatever the sacrifice, truth is worth the price! (Goodwin 259)

3. To the child of God, divine truth is priceless and cannot be surrendered for any reason or for any price.

“To sell it not means never to lose the disposition of mind that causes you to value it above all else” (Brown)

### **Conclusion:**

1. The words “the truth” appear dozens of times throughout our English translations, often referring to the Word of God or the Gospel.
2. As Christians, we “can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,” 2 Cor. 13:8.
3. The apostle John said that Christians need to “be fellowhelpers of the truth,” 3 John 8.

**Six reasons**...for believing the whole truth of God is attainable: **first**, we are told to “buy the truth and sell it not”; **second**, we are able to know the truth and this truth will make us free; **third**, through obedience to the truth our souls are purified; **fourth**, acceptable worship is possible only by abiding in the truth; **fifth**, God, through his word, censures us when we do not walk according to the truth; and **finally**, the Lord’s truth will continue with us forever. (Hall 138-139 emphasis added)

### **Invitation:**

1. Remember, “...truth is not what we make it, but what God stated”

(Higginbotham 4).

2. The divine truth about salvation appears exclusively in the New Testament, Mark 16:16.
3. The divine truth about how Christians remove their sins also appears in the New Testament, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

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# I Come to Thee in the Name of the Lord #2

1 Samuel 17:45

**Thesis:** To emphasize the importance of relying on God throughout this life and its challenges.

**Song:** *A Mighty Fortress; The Banner of the Cross; Onward, Christian Soldiers; Sound the Battle Cry; Soldiers of Christ, Arise; Am I a Soldier of the Cross?*

## **Introduction:**

1. The young man David's encounter with the Philistine giant by the name of Goliath is one of the most colorful narratives anywhere in the Bible, 1 Sam. 17:40-51.
2. The standout statement in that account is: "I come to thee in the name of the LORD" ["Jehovah" ASV], 1 Sam. 17:45.
3. As Christians, we need to essentially present ourselves to this world and its challenges as, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord."

## **Body:**

- I. **Let's notice more carefully some of the details of David's encounter with the giant named Goliath.**
  - A. Philistines and Israelites were mortal enemies.
    1. Their armies were in their respective lines facing each other, ready to battle over control of southern Palestine.
    2. The Philistines were sea people who had landed in southern Palestine years before, and had taken control of the southern coast of Palestine inland, to the rolling hills toward the central mountain range.
    3. The Israelites had years before come from the east across the Jordan River, and had taken control of the central mountain range and westward to the rolling hills, toward the coast.
    4. The Philistines were stronger along the southern coast of Palestine, and the Israelites were stronger in southern Palestine in the mountains.

5. Ever who was stronger at a given time in their shared history dominated the rolling hills between the two nations.
  6. Domination of the rolling hills was determined by frequent battles per the backdrop to this narration about David and Goliath.
- B. David volunteered to fight the Philistine giant and champion, Goliath.
1. Because of his youthfulness, David was not apart of the Israelite army arrayed in battle attire and formation opposite the Philistine army.
  2. He had been left at home to tend the animals while his brothers were apart of the Israelite army.
  3. David, though, was incensed (had righteous anger) because Goliath defied or disregarded the true God by his attacks on God's people.
- C. The match up between David and Goliath was unequal and unfair.
1. Goliath was a battle-hardened and fierce warrior whose mere presence brought trembling fear to other warriors.
  2. David was a young, handsome man who had no experience as a soldier.
  3. Goliath was literally a giant of a man, heavily armored with multiple weapons and even another soldier to carry his shield for him.
  4. David came without armor, sword or spear, but simply with a shepherd's staff and common sling (with five small stones).
  5. Doesn't seem like a fair fight does it?
  6. It wasn't fair; Goliath didn't have a chance because God was on David's side.
- D. David charged ahead.
1. Whereas the soldiers of Israel cowered at the very sight of Goliath, David ran toward Goliath and the army of the Philistines.
  2. David responded to the verbal trash talk of Goliath toward David with these words: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the

God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied,” 1 Sam 17:45.

3. Before Goliath launched his spear or drew his sword, one small, smooth stone hurled from a shepherd’s sling brought the giant down.
4. David was victorious **for God** that day, and God had given David victory.

## **II. What principles can we learn from David’s encounter with Goliath and apply to our own lives?**

- A. For me as a Gospel preacher, there are a number of principles that apply to me.
  1. Everything that I do from the pulpit, classroom lectern or with an open Bible around someone’s kitchen table needs to evidence that “I come to thee in the name of the LORD.”
  2. When I write articles and books, I need to demonstrate that “I come to thee in the name of the LORD.”
  3. When I live my life and interact with family members, fellow Christians, neighbors, creditors, in-laws (and outlaws) and everyone else, I need to demonstrate that “I come to thee in the name of the LORD.”
  4. Therefore, if I genuinely present myself to students of God’s Word as one who has “come to thee in the name of the LORD,” these students of God’s Word need to fully embrace what I preach, teach and write as the Word of God, 1 Thess. 2:13.
  5. Therefore, if I genuinely present myself to those with whom I interact as one who has “come to thee in the name of the LORD,” my family, fellow Christians, neighbors, creditors and everyone else with whom I interact ought to investigate Christianity more carefully and favorably.
- B. There are several principles from David’s encounter with Goliath for all of us as Christians to apply to our lives.
  1. When we each live our lives and interact with family members, fellow Christians, neighbors, creditors, in-laws (and outlaws) and everyone else, we need to demonstrate that we “come...in the name of the LORD.”
  2. Therefore, if we genuinely present ourselves to those

with whom we interact as those who have “come...in the name of the LORD,” family, fellow Christians, neighbors, creditors and everyone else with whom we interact ought to investigate Christianity more carefully and favorably.

3. All of our waking moments ought to be governed by the firm knowledge that we are the children of God, in name as well as in conduct and even the very words that proceed from our mouths, Eph. 5:8; Acts 11:26; Matt. 15:18; Eph. 4:29.
- C. There also will be Goliath-like giants in our lives that present seemingly insurmountable challenges.
1. There are a lot of ordinary transitions in life that seem at the time to be insurmountable (life seems too complicated at times), but we manage to get through those times, e.g. adolescent years, milestone birthdays, parenting, etc.
  2. People of all ages from infants to mature adults can and often do face serious or life threatening medical problems, but we all die and go to be with the Lord sooner or later, Heb. 9:27; John 14:1-3.
  3. Loss of jobs, intolerable working conditions, death of loved ones, ungodly family members, financial crisis and more may seem as Philistine giants in our lives against which we are unevenly matched.
  4. None of us are going to get out of this world alive, but we can persevere over all the giants this world sends against us to live forever with God in heaven, Luke 12:4-5; Acts 20:23-24; 21:13; Rom. 8:35-39.
  5. Some in this world will deliberately confront us, hoping to bring a cloud of dismay over us or actually harm us, but we have legitimate hope that supersedes the worst, ugliest and most awful Philistine giant this world can pit against us, 1 Pet. 3:14.

### **Conclusion:**

1. We might say that David was more than a noted singer in Israel; when he met Goliath, he was a noted slinger in Israel.
2. David slew his giant with the help of God; David was victorious through God.
3. We can slay our giants with the help of God; we can be victorious

through God.

4. Especially Christians can courageously rush into the battle of giants and win if Christians opt to rely on each other for strength to keep up the good fight, 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; Heb. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:6-8.

**Invitation:**

1. We can claim victory for ourselves over earthly giants to live with God forever if we believe and obey God's Word.
2. Belief and obedience results in salvation, Mark 16:16; Heb. 5:9; Rom. 6:17.
3. Continued belief and obedience by Christians will keep them saved, Rev. 2:10.

# Another Generation

Judges 2:7-11

**Thesis:** Like Israel of Old, apostasy from God is only one generation away.

## **Introduction:**

1. The godly influence of Joshua was able to encourage an entire generation of Israelites to be faithful to God, Judges 2:7-11.
2. When that generation passed away, however, the following generation was wicked and ungodly.
3. Within a single generation, Israel turned from serving the living God to idols and wickedness instead.
4. Like Israel of Old, apostasy from God is only one generation away.

## **Body:**

### **I. A generation thoroughly taught the Word of God remains faithful to Almighty God.**

- A. Thorough teaching of the Word of God involves definitive instruction.
  1. Every opportunity must be seized to instruct the upcoming generation in the Word of God, Deut. 6:7.
  2. From infancy onward children must be instructed in the Word of God, 2 Tim. 3:15.
  3. Fathers of families have the primary responsibility to see that their children are educated in the Word of God, Eph. 6:4.
  4. Elders of the churches have the responsibility to see that the respective congregations they serve are fed a steady diet of God's Word, Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2.
  5. Preachers and teachers must preach and teach "sound [uncorrupt] words," 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 1:9.
  6. Every child of God needs to accept personal responsibility and learn how to 'handle aright' (ASV) the Word of God, 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2.
- B. Thorough teaching of the Word of God involves unmistakable demonstration of the Word of God in the lives of its teachers.

1. In my childhood, religion was an item inherited and an unfamiliar book to take up space on a high shelf of the floor-to-ceiling bookcase.
2. From infancy onward I was instructed with the motto: “Do as I say, not as I do”; how instructive do you think those words coming from my mother were in my upbringing?
3. Parents must wake up and realize that the training (good or bad) they instill in their children at young ages will affect them for the rest of their lives, Prov. 22:6.
4. Elders must demonstrate in their lives the teaching of God’s Word, 1 Pet. 5:2-3; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
5. Preachers must demonstrate the Word of God in their lives, 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17.

## **II. An untaught or poorly taught generation turns from faithful worship and service of Almighty God.**

- A. Untaught and poorly taught generations produce families that no longer worship and serve Almighty God.
  1. Christians who turn from the faith face an eternity worse than what awaited them before they obeyed the Gospel, 2 Pet. 2:20-22.
  2. Children who come along and who in their most formidable years learn from their parents lack of religious commitment or ungodliness often are irrecoverable, 2 Tim. 1:5.
  3. Poorly taught children fare little better than those in whom is instilled lack of religious commitment or ungodliness, 1 Sam. 3:13.
  4. Families (and society itself) are ruined by any generation either untaught or poorly taught the Word of God.
- B. Untaught and poorly taught generations wreak havoc on local congregations of the Lord’s church.
  1. The church is the family of God, 1 Tim. 3:15.
  2. The local family of God is comprised of Christian families, so that when those families lose upcoming generations to apostasy, the local church also loses those souls to the church, i.e. church attendance plummets, financial support of the church diminishes,

etc.

3. Instead of moving forward with the cause of Christ in the community, local churches, then, fight for their survival and to keep the presence of the Lord's church apparent in the community.
4. Untaught and poorly taught generations also disregard all Bible doctrine, disregard some Bible doctrine or elevate human ideas to the status of Bible doctrine, Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:1-3; Titus 1:14; Heb. 13:9.
5. Untaught and poorly taught generations have a devalued reverence for God, Isa. 29:13.

**Conclusion:**

1. Remember, apostasy is only one generation away.
2. That was true respecting the generation following the time of Joshua.
3. That is equally true now, and it is ever being demonstrated to the ruination of families and churches.

**Invitation:**

1. Resolve now to be steadfast and unmovable as a Christian, who will do his dead level best to spare families and the church from apostasy, 1 Cor. 15:33.
2. If not a Christian already, start by becoming a child of God, Acts 2:38.
3. If an erring child of God, return to the Lord with a fervor that will keep you and those you influence faithful to God, Rev. 2:10.

# Conscience

## Void of Offence

Acts 24:16

**Thesis:** To encourage first the proper education of the conscience, and secondly, the proper use of the conscience to serve God.

### Introduction:

1. The English word “conscience” appears 31 times in the singular and once in the plural in the Bible (all instances being in the New Testament).
2. Though the word “conscience” does not appear in the Old Testament, the model of the human conscience appears expressed in other words, 2 Sam. 24:10.
3. “Under both the old covenant and the new covenant the conscience must be formed by the will of God” (*Nelson’s*).
4. The Greek word *suneidesis* (soon-i’-day-sis) translated “conscience” is a compound word in its parts meaning ‘with awareness’ (*Biblesoft’s*).

### Body:

#### I. Just what is the conscience?

- A. Consider these useful definitions of the word “conscience.”

The awareness that a proposed act is or is not conformable to one’s ideal of right and manifesting itself in the feeling of obligation or duty. ...Conscience is not so much a distinct faculty of the mind, like perception, memory, etc., as an exercise of the judgment and the power of feeling, as employed with reference to moral truth. It implies the moral sense “to discern good and evil” (Heb 5:14) and a feeling, more or less strong, of responsibility. ...the testimony of conscience certainly rests on the foundation of a divine law... (*New Unger’s*).

1. “A person’s inner awareness of conforming to the will of God or departing from it, resulting in either a sense of approval or condemnation” (*Nelson’s*).

2. Vine says of “conscience”:

...that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God, as that which is designed to govern our lives’; hence (a) the sense of guiltiness before God; Heb 10:2; (b) that process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad, and so prompting to do the former, and avoid the latter; Rom 2:15...

3. An English dictionary definition for the word “conscience” is: “the sense or consciousness of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one’s own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good” (*Merriam*).

B. Generally, every human has a conscience.

1. Easton identifies “conscience” as “that faculty of the mind, or inborn sense of right and wrong, by which we judge of the moral character of human conduct. It is common to all men.”

2. The first indication of the human conscience in action pertains to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they hid themselves from God, Gen. 3:8 (*Bible History*).

**II. What relationship does one’s conscience sustain to right and wrong?**

A. One’s conscience approves of a person’s conduct when it perceives or is aware that it is in harmony with what the conscience believes is godly.

1. A conscience only has reference to one’s perceived relationship with God, 1 Pet. 2:19.

2. If there were no God, there would be no conscience.

3. However, mankind does have a conscience, an awareness of right and wrong, thereby indirectly affirming that there is a God and he has revealed his will to mankind.

B. One’s conscience disapproves of a person’s conduct when it perceives or is aware that it is not in harmony with what the conscience believes is godly.

1. The first occasion of the word “conscience” illustrates the condemning capacity of one’s conscience, John 8:9.

2. Everyone who realizes that he or she has not conducted himself or herself according to a moral code of conduct (ethics) to which he or she subscribes feels the pain of conscience.
  3. It is quite possible and often is the case, though, that one subscribes to an imperfect moral code of conduct, devised by himself or his peers.
  4. The mechanism of conscience is by God's design, but what mankind does with it is of his own making.
- C. In the truest sense, the conscience pertains to the morality of what is right and what is wrong, based on what God's Word (the Bible) reveals, 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3.
1. A moral person is one whose conscience approves of his conduct based on his conformity with the Word of God.
  2. An immoral person is one whose conscience disapproves of his conduct based on lack of conformity to the Word of God.
  3. An amoral person is one whose conscience is inoperable because he does not subscribe to any moral code of ethics (not the Bible for sure).
  4. The majority of our society has moved from immorality to amorality!

### **III. How can one have a "pure conscience"?**

- A. First, one's conscience can be wrong.
1. Though the apostle Paul was careful never to violate his conscience, improperly educated, Paul's conscience incorrectly commended him formerly for persecuting Christians to imprisonment and death, Acts 23:1; 24:16; 26:9-11; Gal. 1:13.
  2. Obviously, then, the conscience alone is not a safe guide; the popular expression, "Let your conscience be your guide," is erroneous.
  3. However, a conscience properly educated by the Word of God can be a great help in seeking the approval of God in this life and the life to come.
- B. Tragically, a person can disarm the benefits of the mechanism of conscience that God instilled in each person.
1. A person can violate his conscience, which brings mental pain and anguish, Rom. 13:5.

2. One's conscience can be weak because it is not adequately educated by the Word of God to know certainly the difference between right and wrong, 1 Cor. 8:1-13.
  3. If one violates his conscience often enough, he 'sears his conscience' so that he can commit unspeakable acts without discomforting his mind, 1 Tim. 4:2.
  4. One can have a 'defiled conscience' where he continues to do what he believes to be sinful, Titus 1:15.
- C. There is only one way to have a "pure conscience," 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3.
1. We want a pure conscience because one's pure conscience approves of one's conduct as being in harmony with the Word of God and brings peace of mind, 2 Cor. 1:12.
  2. We all want and need "a good conscience," 1 Tim. 1:15, 19; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pet. 3:16.
  3. A pure conscience was not attainable under either Patriarchy or Judaism, for there was always an awareness of sins, Heb. 9:9; 10:2.
  4. Only through Jesus Christ can one's conscience be 'purged,' Heb. 9:14.
  5. One's conscience is properly cleansed by the washing of water through baptism, Heb. 10:22; 1 Pet. 3:21.

**Conclusion:**

1. *New Unger's Bible Dictionary* well summarizes and contrasts the good conscience with an evil conscience.

If a man knows his doing to be in harmony with this law his conscience is good (Acts 23:1; 1 Tim 1:5,19; Heb 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16,21), pure (1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3), and void of offense. If what he does is evil, so also is his conscience, inasmuch as it is conscious of such evil (Heb 10:22); it is defiled (Titus 1:15; 1 Cor 8:7) when it is stained by evil deeds; or seared with a branding iron (1 Tim 4:2) when it is branded with its evil deeds, or cauterized, i.e., made insensible to all feeling.

2. Chiefly, "[f]or the right management of conscience, we should, 1. Endeavor to obtain acquaintance with the law of God..."

(*McClintock and Strong*).

3. Conscience is a religious and moral instinct that only humans have by which one accuses or excuses his own conduct respecting his understanding of revealed revelation from God, Rom. 2:15.
4. Finally, we ought to obey a conscience correctly educated with the Word of God, Heb. 13:18.

**Invitation:**

1. Each of us ought to “to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men,” Acts 24:16.
2. Our consciences are correctly purified by obeying the Gospel of Christ, 1 Pet. 3:21.
3. After baptism, we must arm ourselves with the Word of God so we know the difference between right and wrong and act accordingly, but repent when we find ourselves out of harmony with the Word of God, Heb. 5:14; Acts 8:22.

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# Ye Shall Not Turn Aside

## Deuteronomy 5:32

**Thesis:** To emphasize the importance of adhering to strictly the Word of God wherever God has specified anything.

### **Introduction:**

1. Deviation from the expressed or revealed Word of God has never been an option for mankind with which Almighty God has been pleased.
2. Nevertheless, mankind has always deviated from the Word of God, for which Almighty God has demonstrated his grave displeasure.
3. In the past, Almighty God often punished deviation from his revealed will immediately or directly.
4. In Final Judgment, Almighty God will demonstrate his grave displeasure toward humanity for deviation from his revealed will.
5. However, by then, it will be too late to appease an angry God.
6. We cannot emphasize too greatly the importance of adhering strictly to the Word of God wherever God has specified anything.

### **Body:**

#### **I. Mankind has a long history of deviating from the revealed will of God.**

- A. God has not left mankind without instruction.
  1. God spoke through the fathers of families in the period of Patriarchy: "In common usage the title patriarch is assigned especially to those whose lives are recorded in Scripture previous to the time of Moses" (*New Unger's*), Gen. 3:9-19; 12:1-3.
  2. God spoke through Moses and other inspired prophets in the period of Judaism, John 9:29; Luke 1:55, 70; 2 Sam. 23:2
  3. God speaks to us today through his Son, Jesus Christ, and inspired prophets whose words are recorded in the New Testament, John 1:17; Heb. 1:1-2; 9:15.
- B. From the dawn of humanity's presence on earth through the present, violation of God's will or sin has continued to be man's norm.
  1. Adam and Eve began the human saga of sinful

- rebellion against God, Gen. 3.
- 2. Another notable early example of mankind's disregard for God's instructions was the building of the Tower of Babel, Gen. 9:1; 11:1-9.
- 3. Because of sins, especially idolatry, God removed Old Testament Israel from Palestine, the ten northern tribes by Assyrian captivity and the southern tribes through Babylonian captivity, Deut. 28:15; Josh. 23:15-16.
- 4. As Jesus prophesied, Israel of the first century likewise was overcome and dispersed, Matt. 24.

## **II. God's Word has always been immutable.**

- A. Man's preferences do not override God's revealed will.
  - 1. A notable example under Judaism of God's unwillingness to permit man's preferences to override his instructions pertained to the acquisition of fire for use in Tabernacle worship, Lev. 10:1-2.
  - 2. Later, King Saul's "better idea," cost him the kingdom because he did not follow the instructions of God, 1 Sam. 15.
  - 3. Mankind is misguided when he thinks he can direct his own steps religiously, Jer. 10:23; Matt. 15:9.
- B. Warnings within God's Word have always cautioned humanity from tampering with God's revealed will.
  - 1. Warnings that mankind must not alter the Word of God appear early and often throughout the Bible, Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Josh. 1:7; Gal. 1:6-9.
  - 2. These warnings are strategically positioned in our Bibles, Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19.
  - 3. Literally, it behooves mankind "not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" from doing everything that God commands us, Deut 5:32.

## **III. God's Word will be the standard applied in Final Judgment.**

- A. Deviation from God's Word often brought swift judgment in times past.
  - 1. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden because of their sin, Gen. 3.
  - 2. In a night, the Tower of Babel was destroyed and the people's languages were confused, Gen. 11.
  - 3. God suddenly destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins, Gen. 19.

4. Ananias and Sapphira suddenly died because of their sin, Acts 5:1-10.
- B. Deviation from God's Word will bring eternal judgment against sinners in Final Judgment.
  1. Mankind is bound to do whatever God through his Word has authorized, and to do it in the way he prescribed if he specified how, Col. 3:16-17.
  2. Essentially, we, today, will be judged by the words of Christ, John 12:48.
  3. To avoid a harsh eternal judgment, souls must comply with or obey the Word of God, Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25; Jam. 1:18.
  4. Everyone whose name does not appear in the Book of Life will be cast into hell, Rev. 20:12-15.

**Conclusion:**

1. We must be careful not to turn aside from the Word of God, for if we turn aside, we will not find the narrow gate, Matt. 7:13-14.
2. We can know without doubt from the New Testament what God wants us to know and do respecting salvation, worship and Christian service.

**Invitation:**

1. Every soul that knows the difference between right and wrong is accountable for sin in his or her life, Rom. 3:10, 23.
2. Only obeying the Gospel can remove those sins, Rom. 6:17; 10:16; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 4:17.
3. After being baptized for the remission of sins, a Christian must continue to practice Christianity faithfully, Acts 2:38; 8:22; 1 Cor. 15:58.

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# The Word that God Putteth in My Mouth

Numbers 22:38

**Thesis:** To emphasize the immutability of the Word of God irrespective of human preferences.

## **Introduction:**

1. God's Word is indelible or permanent.
2. God's Word is not subject to the whims of humanity.
3. Faithful proponents of God's Word have no choice but to present God's Word to the world as God gave it.

## **Body:**

### **I. The Word of God is dependable.**

- A. God's Word is dependable because of "the immutability of his counsel" and because it is "impossible for God to lie," Heb. 6:17-18.
- B. God's Word is dependable because the nature of God is changeless, Mal. 3:6; Heb. 1:12; 13:8; Jam. 1:17.
- C. God's Word is dependable because it endures forever, Psa. 119:89; Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25.

### **II. The Word of God is not subject to modification by humans.**

- A. Humans attempt to change the Word of God, Matt. 15:9; Rom. 10:1-3; Isa. 29:13.
- B. Actually, mankind cannot prevail in its attempts to change the Word of God, because Final Judgment will be according to the Word of God, Matt. 7:21-23; Ecc. 12:13-14; Rev. 20:12.
- C. Other gospels do not have the capacity to save men from their sins, Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 11:4.

### **III. Preachers and teachers of the Word of God must proclaim it faithfully irrespective of whether it is popular with them or those to whom they speak.**

- A. Balaam wanted desperately to preach against Israel because he was promised a handsome reward for doing that, but he could only preach the Word of God, Num. 22:38.
- B. Likewise, preachers and teachers today are obligated to only preach the Word of God, 1 Pet. 4:11.

- C. God's preachers must preach the Word of God whether people like it or not, 2 Tim. 4:2-4; 1 Thess. 2:13.
- D. God's preachers also must preach "all the counsel of God," Acts 20:27.

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Believing a lie doesn't make it so, 2 Thess. 2:11-12.
- 2. Pretending that the Word of God on some subjects does not exist is pointless.
- 3. Becoming angry with anyone who preaches or teaches God's Word truthfully is really anger expressed toward God; how profitable is that?

**Invitation:**

- 1. The Word that God put in my mouth, for instance, respecting salvation from sin is the only thing that I can announce to humanity.
- 2. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16:16.
- 3. The Word of God further reads that Christians who sin must repent of those sins, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

# Shut the Doors!

## Psalm 122:1

**Thesis:** To emphasize how loudly not only one's words speak, but how deafening the noise from one's actions is.

### **Introduction:**

1. On different occasions, two different male members of this congregation (who are no longer worshipping here) verbalized that 'We should just shut the doors' of this house of worship.
2. Inside me, each time I just shuddered at the thought of discontinuing to worship Almighty God in his own appointed way in this community.
3. However, one does not have verbalize such statements to essentially by one's conduct to say the same thing.
4. Do you realize not only how loudly one's words speak, but how deafening the noise from one's actions is?

### **Body:**

#### **I. Irregular or spotty church attendance shouts from the rooftops the haunting words respecting the Lord's church in this community, "Shut the doors!"**

- A. What we call "church attendance" was a primary characteristic of a vibrant and enthusiastic first century church.
  1. Faithful children of God in every age enthusiastically sought every opportunity to assemble with other children of God to worship the great God of the universe, Psa. 122:1.
  2. Previous to the first century, the Lord's church was the coveted object of Old Testament prophecy, Isa. 2:2-3; Jer. 50:4-5; Zech. 8:21-23.
  3. The infant Jerusalem church of our Lord worshipped God "stedfastly" or devoted themselves to regular worship attendance, Acts 2:42.
  4. In addition, the early Christians associated with each other "daily," studied the Scriptures "daily" and received new members to the church "daily," Acts 2:46; 17:11; 16:5.

5. Do you assemble with the children of God each opportunity you have, and what are you doing “daily” for the cause of Christ in this community?
- B. Poor and irregular church attendance really says to the community that one does not have enough conviction or conversion to really care if the Lord’s church continues to manifest its presence in the community.
1. The fervor of many first century Jewish Christians cooled so that by their actions they began to abandon the church of our Lord through lack of attendance of worship assemblies, Heb. 10:25.
  2. The writer of Hebrews stated that failure to attend the assemblies of the Lord’s church is a willful sin, Heb. 10:26.
  3. According to the inspired writer of Hebrews, failure to assemble with the saints when we can amounts to trampling the Son of God and saying that the shed blood of Jesus Christ is inconsequential to us, Heb. 10:29.
  4. Failing to assemble with the Lord’s people is comparable to crucifying Jesus Christ again, Heb. 6:6.
  5. God will bring the severest punishment upon Christians who fail to assemble with other Christians, Heb. 10:25-31; 2 Pet. 2:20-22.
  6. Does your church attendance shout to the world “Shut the doors,” or does it demonstrate that you are doing everything within your power as a manifestation of your earnest conversion to hold those doors open?

## **II. Contributions that are hit or miss and not in keeping with one’s prosperity with the force of a megaphone boom out the message, “Shut the doors!”**

- A. New Testament instruction regarding God-approved worship is neither insufficient nor vague, including giving as worship.
1. Giving is one of the five acts of New Testament worship that occurs in the first day of the week assembly, Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
  2. Each Christian’s giving is supposed to be planned rather than ‘what he finds in his pocket’ when the collection plate passes by, 2 Cor. 9:7.

3. Each Christian's giving is supposed to be attended by cheerfulness at the opportunity to contribute through worship to the Lord's church, Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 8:12; 9:7.
  4. Each Christian's giving is supposed to be with the regularity afforded each Lord's Day, 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
  5. Each Christian's giving is supposed to be proportionate to his prosperity, 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6; Prov. 11:24.
  6. Do you do your part to keep the doors of the Lord's house open by your heartfelt weekly contribution?
- B. Careless giving habits and a hit or miss history respecting one's church contribution really says to the community that one does not have enough conviction or conversion to really care if the Lord's church continues to manifest its presence in the community.
1. Amazingly, a person who would not strong-arm a local store and rob it, calling himself a Christian will attempt to strong-arm God and rob him, Mal. 3:8.
  2. Any child of God who does not give according to his prosperity is robbing God, 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
  3. Any child of God who does not give regularly is robbing God, 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
  4. Any child of God who does not plan his giving and give according to that plan is robbing God, 2 Cor. 9:7.
  5. I wonder how many Sunday dinners and toys have been purchased with money robbed from the Almighty God of the universe?
  6. Back taxes to the IRS nothing, who owes back contributions to God himself?
  7. Whenever a Christian robs God, he is at the same time yelling above the din of roaring jet engines, "Shut the doors!"

**III. Lives lived so loosely that neither the community nor the Lord can be sure that we are Christians is comparable to skywriting the message across the horizon, "Shut the doors!"**

- A. Christians are supposed to be noticeably different from non-Christians.
1. Christians are to be peculiar or special to God from the rest of humanity, Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9; cf. Exod. 19:5;

- Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18.
2. Jesus Christ observed that the disciples of Christ differ from the ungodly world, John 17:16, 20.
  3. Even some Christians are really of the world in contrast to faithful Christians who are not of this world, 1 John 4:5-6.
  4. Faithful Christians act like Christ and are noticeably Christ-like, 1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:15 NKJV.
  5. The Lord's people are supposed to act like Christians in every aspect of their lives, Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:7; Eph. 5:8.
  6. If the words that roll off your tongues and your daily, everywhere conduct is not Christ-like, you are helping to close the doors of the Lord's church in this community!
- B. Christians who fail to take their Christianity seriously enough to live differently from an ungodly world are screaming to that lost world, "Come, help me shut the doors of the Lord's church in this community!"
1. Unfortunately, many Christians today like Christians in first century Corinth walk as ungodly as the lost world around us, 1 Cor. 3:3.
  2. How do Christians who gamble, drink, curse, commit immoralities, tell filthy jokes, lie, disregard civil law and dress like the world differ from the billions of lost souls who populate this mud ball we call earth, 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 2 Cor. 6:17?
  3. The public sins of Christians call to the ungodly world the cry, "Come, help me shut the doors of the Lord's church in this community!" 2 Tim. 3:1-7.
  4. Amazingly, the very ones who most often are primarily responsible by their ungodliness for the demise of local congregations imagine that the problem the survival of the Lord's church in any community must have to do with poor or dull preaching, ineffective elders, lack of entertainment or simply a mobile population.
  5. Is there enough evidence to convict you as a faithful Christian, in concert with other Christians doing everything within their power, including the faithful living of their Christianity, to keep the doors of the

Lord's church open, 1 Cor. 15:58?

6. Or, is ungodliness on your part screeching to the high heavens, "The doors of this meetinghouse will close with my help!"

**Conclusion:**

1. Are you doing all you can for the promotion of the cause of Christ in this community?
2. Or, are you by your words and conduct actually thundering the message, "Shut the doors"?
3. How many meetinghouses of the Lord's people throughout the ages have "shut the doors" to the amazement of inattentive brethren who were more preoccupied with inconsequential matters of this world than truly dedicated to promoting the cause of Christ?

**Invitation:**

1. Are you holding the doors of the Lord's house open, or are you pushing them shut?
2. Everyone who obeys the Gospel and becomes a Christian is doing his or her part to keep the doors of the house of God open in this community, Rom. 10:16; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 5:9; Rom. 6:17; 1 Pet. 1:22.
3. Every Christian who worships God regularly and devotes himself or herself fully to the cause of Christ is doing his or her part to keep the doors of the house of God open in this community, Psa. 122:1; Matt. 6:33; Titus 2:14; 2 Tim. 4:6-8.