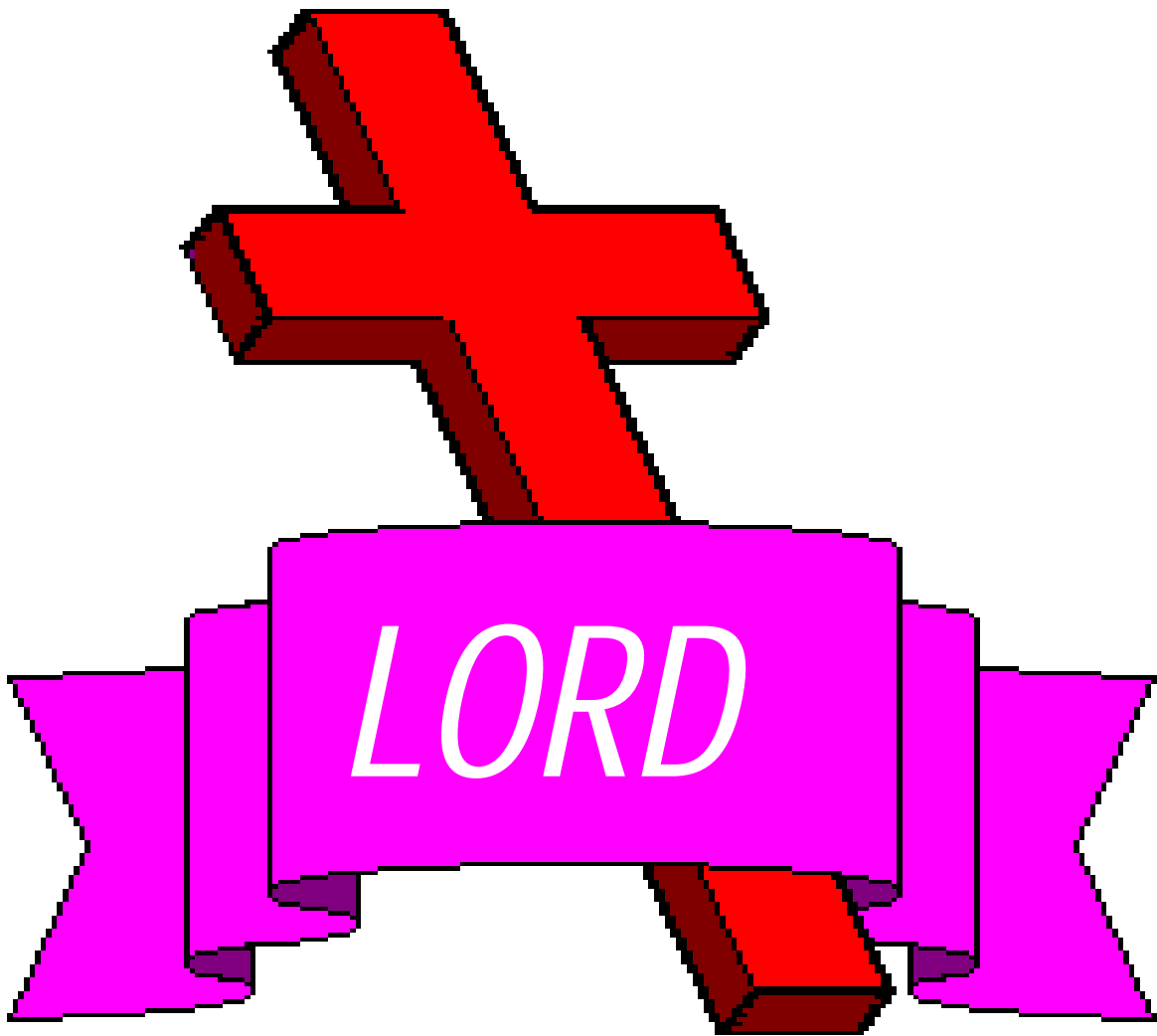


JESUS IS



By Robert G. Dockery
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Welcome

We are glad you have chosen to study the word of God and to delve into the depths of His Word. By studying His word, one can grow in knowledge and in maturity and understanding of what is required by God in living our daily lives and our journey towards heaven.

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We pray you will enjoy your study of God's Word.

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LESSON 1

JESUS IS LORD

John 1:1-5, 14

Introduction:

- A. In order to have ready access to information about people in the news, most newspapers keep a "biographical morgue."
1. Into this morgue goes information about all kinds of people – living and dead, great and notorious, good and bad.
 2. The Washington Post marks its file folders with a one-word or two-word summary of the subject's claim to fame.
 - a. For example, the folders will list a famous name, followed by the brief description. ("Kirk Douglas: Actor" or "William Perry: Football Star").
 - b. One of the folders in the biographical morgue of The Washington Post is simply marked: "Jesus Christ: Martyr."
- B. Throughout history, many labels have been fixed on Christ.
1. Some of these labels, like that placed on Him by the The Washington Post have been tragically incomplete.
 2. Other labels have been totally false and misleading.
 3. Still, however, in the file of his mind, every individual must determine what label to put on Christ.
 4. Jesus himself asked the question, "*What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?*" (*Matt. 22:42*).
 - a. Every individual must decide for himself how he will answer the question.
 5. Let us examine the teaching of the Bible in answering the questions of who Christ was and why He came to this earth.

Discussion:

B. THE ONLY ONE OF HIS KIND

- A. In John 3:16, Jesus is called the "*only begotten Son (of God).*"
 - A. The words, "*only begotten*" are a translation of the single Greek word *MONOGENES*, which literally means "unique, only, or only-one-of-its-kind."
 - B. There is a special relationship between Christ and the Father; he is the Son of God in a sense in which none else can be!
- B. What makes Jesus "the only one of His kind?"
 - A. His birth was unique.
 - A. He was conceived without a human father.
 1. Jesus was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14). The circumstances surrounding His birth are fully described in Lk. 1:26-36.
 2. Luke, who was himself a medical doctor, was convinced that the birth of Christ was a biological miracle.
 - B. He had an existence prior to His birth.
 1. The life of Christ did not begin at birth. He existed from the beginning, co-eternal with God (Jn. 1:1).
 2. Jesus claimed to have been in existence before Abraham was ever born (Jn. 8:58).
 3. His birth was the coming of God in human form. See Phil. 2:6,7
 - C. He was born to die as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.
 1. Jesus came into the world to sacrifice himself for the sins of others. Jesus could have avoided death but he deliberately chose it as the purpose for which he came (Jn. 10:18).
 - B. His life was unique.
 - A. He lived a flawless life.
 1. Jesus "*committed no sin*" (I Pet. 2:22).

2. God made him *"to be sin for us who knew no sin...."* (II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).
- B. He performed astounding miracles.
1. Jesus said, *"The very works that I do bear witness of me"* (Jn. 5:36).
 2. He changed the weather, multiplied food, healed physical deformities, and raised the dead.
- C. He taught unsurpassed lessons.
1. His teachings bore no resemblance to what people were used to (Matt. 7:28,29).
 2. It was said of him: *"Never did a man speak the way this man speaks"* (Jn. 7:46).
- C. His death was unique.
- A. Christ died in fulfillment of prophecy.
1. In Christ's death on the cross, no less than 33 distinct Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled.
 2. Such details as the betrayal price, the piercing of His hands and feet, and His burial in a rich man's tomb were predicted hundreds of years before they happened.
- B. Christ died willingly.
1. He did not have to die, yet he willingly *"tasted death for everyone"* (Heb. 2:9).
- C. Christ died that we might live.
1. He bore our griefs, suffered for our sorrows, and was wounded for our transgressions (Isa. 53:5,6).
 2. *"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8).

C. WHY DID CHRIST COME – WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF HIS MISSION:

- A. Christ came to do His Father's will (Jn. 6:38).
- A. The incarnation was a visual lesson on the importance of obedience to the divine will.

- B. Jesus came in obedience to the wishes of the heavenly Father. His coming was designed to teach men to obey God (Heb. 5:8,9).
 - C. We can never fully understand the significance of Christ's coming until we have learned the importance of obedience.
- B. Christ came to teach men to live (Jn. 10:10).
 - A. The Greek word *PERISSOS* which is translated "*abundantly*" in John 10:10 really means "exceedingly, above the common."
 - B. Jesus came to show men how to get more out of life.
 - C. We can never be really happy, useful, or fulfilled until we adopt Christ's program for living.
- C. Christ came to seek the lost (Lk. 19:10; Matt. 18:11).
 - A. Jesus came into the world because men were lost – it was man's need which brought the Savior here.
 - B. This emphasizes the seriousness of man's condition in the lost state.
 - C. It was necessary for the Word to become flesh in order that men might be reclaimed from sin (I Tim. 1:15).
- D. Christ came to call men to repentance (Matt. 9:13).
 - A. This is the way in which Christ seeks the lost: He demands repentance (Lk. 13:3).
 - B. Christ calls upon men to turn from sin, renounce it, and abandon it!
- E. Christ came to give Himself a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).
 - A. When you sum it all up, Jesus came to die for the sins of mankind.
 - B. He was "*the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world*" (Rev. 13:8; Jn. 1:29).
 - C. Any time we lose sight of that fact, we are guilty of misrepresenting the purpose for which He came.

D. A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST Heb. 1:1-4

- A. He is heir of all things.
 - A. Everything in the universe is His by right of inheritance. Nothing lies outside the scope of His ownership.

- B. He is the maker of the world.
 - A. *"The world was made through Him" (Jn. 1:10).*
 - B. *"In Him all things were created , both in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible . . .all things have been created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16).*
- C. He is the radiance of God's glory.
 - A. The word for "radiance" is used only here in the Bible – it refers to "bright shining."
 - B. Jesus is the glow of God.
- D. He is the exact representation of God.
 - A. *"He is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).*
 - B. He said that those who had seen Him had seen the Father (Jn. 14:9).
- E. He is the power upholding the universe.
 - A. He is the force which makes the universe optional.
- F. He is the one who purifies us from sins.
 - A. *"There is salvation in no one else . . ." (Acts 4:12).*
- G. He is seated at God's right hand.
 - A. He occupies a place of power and glory with God on His throne.
 - B. He is *"our Man in heaven"*, sitting where no one else can sit.
- H. He is far greater than the angels.
 - A. Even though the angels are mighty, they cannot even begin to compare with Jesus.

Conclusion:

- A. The good news of the gospel is that God loved us enough to take human form and become one of us, thus establishing a link of identity between Himself and us, and at Calvary offering Himself as payment for the penalty of our sins.
 - 1. Or, as John puts it: *" . . ."And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . ."* (Jn. 1:14).

- B. Christ's entrance into the world is history's most dramatic and important moment. He is easily the most colossal figure ever to appear on the stage of human history.
1. When Christ comes into an individual life, it is the greatest event in that person's history.
 2. Has Jesus come into your life?

LESSON 2

CRUCIAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRIST

Matt. 22:42

Introduction:

- A. No character in history has so dominated the thoughts and lives of men as Jesus of Nazareth.
 - 1. His teaching and influence are found wherever civilization has gone.
 - 2. No person in history has been so universally admired . . . or so deeply hated.
- B. The truth is that the world does not know quite what to make of Jesus.
 - 1. For centuries, men have debated who and what he was. A multitude of questions have been raised and multitudes of confusing and conflicting answers have been given.
 - 2. Questions about Christ are nothing new.
 - a. Jesus was regarded as a mystery by many of the people who were touched by His ministry on earth.
 - b. They wondered among themselves who He was and what they should do about Him.
 - c. The questions which perplexed them are still being asked today.
 - 3. It is simply impossible to consider Christ for long without asking questions about Him. Let us consider some of them.

Discussion:

I. **WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT CHRIST – WHOSE SON IS HE? Matt. 22:42**

- A. Various theories:
 - 1. **THAT HE WAS A MYTH.** Some say that Jesus never lived – that there was no such person in history. In 1970, a well-known religious writer published a book entitled The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross in which he theorized that Jesus Christ was not the name of a man, but the name of an hallucinogenic mushroom! However, documentary evidence leaves absolutely no doubt about the historicity of Jesus. Josephus, Tacitus, and Seutonius (all first or second century historians) mention Him by name. Famed historian,

Will Durant wrote: "No one . . . can doubt the reality of Christ."

2. **THAT HE WAS A FRAUD.** A movie entitled, *The Passover Plot*, charged that Jesus was just a clever political schemer who used trickery to deceive people into believing He was a miracle worker. But why should He have pretended to be something he was not when he gained nothing from it but suffering and death? How could He have given the world the highest ethical and moral standards it has ever known if He Himself was a liar and an imposter?
3. **THAT HE WAS ONLY A GOOD MAN.** As C. S. Lewis has noted, however: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said couldn't be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic . . . or else He would be the devil of hell; you must make your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse . . ." Was He "Lord, liar, or lunatic?" One must decide.

B. The Biblical View

1. Jesus was divine.
 - a. John begins his account of the life of Christ by asserting that "*the Word was with God and the word **was** God*" (Jn. 1:1).
 - b. According to Paul, Christ was "*the image of the invisible God . . .*" (Col. 1:15).
 - c. We are also told that "*In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*" (Col. 2:9). In other words, the whole fulness of deity is in Him.
 - d. Proofs of His divinity:
 - (1) His sinless life (Heb. 4:15).
 - (2) His astounding miracles (Mk. 2:12).
 - (3) Eyewitness testimony – men and women from all walks of life acknowledged His divinity: Demons (Mk. 5:7); Peter (Matt. 16:16); John (Jn. 20:30-31); A Roman Centurion (Matt. 27:54); Pilate's wife (Matt. 27:19); Thomas (Jn. 20:28); Saul of Tarsus (Acts 26:9-15).
 - (4) His incomparable teachings. Matt. 5:1-7,29, especially vs. 28,29.
2. Jesus was also human.
 - a. Jesus was God in the flesh; He was deity clothed with

humanity.

- b. *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). Jesus took "the form of a bond-servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7).*
- c. The human nature of Christ was in no way different from that of ordinary men. *"He had to be made like His brethren in all things . . ." (Heb. 2:17).*
- d. Because He became human, Jesus understands the human situation. He was *"tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).*
- e. The humanity of Christ is demonstrated by His reaction to human situations.
 - (1) When He went without food, he became hungry (Matt. 4:2).
 - (2) When He walked a long way, he became tired (Jn. 4:6).
 - (3) On the cross, He became thirsty (Jn. 19:28).
 - (4) When He saw others weeping, He became sorrowful (Jn. 11:33-35).
 - (5) When He saw people in distress, He was touched with compassion.
- f. When Jesus ascended back into heaven, He was touched with compassion.
- g. His human nature was not a temporary shield.
 - (1) Paul classed himself as a witness of the resurrected body of Jesus on the basis that he had to see Christ in heaven (I Cor. 15).
 - (2) This explains Paul's statement in I Timothy 2:5: *"There is one mediator . . . between God and men, the man Jesus Christ."*
- h. Jesus is not only God; He is also man. He is not half-God and half-man; He is wholly God and wholly man. He is God-man.
- i. Jesus knows us and understands us because He Himself has a human nature.

II. WHAT KIND OF MAN IS THIS? Mk. 4:41

- A. It is not possible to understand our responsibility to Jesus if we do not understand Him.
- B. The Bible gives many insights into the personality of Jesus as He lived on earth.
 - 1. He was a man of great strengths. Many have conceived of Jesus as being a slightly effeminate, harmless, ineffectual shadow of a man. Peter Marshall referred to this view as "the emaciated Christ, the pale, anemic, namby-pamby Jesus . . ." The Bible pictures Jesus differently. The constant impression that Jesus made on those who knew Him was that of a man of vast strengths – a man who often walked the 150 mile round-trip between Galilee and Jerusalem, who endured forty days and nights in the wilderness, who boldly expelled the money changers from the temple, who courageously denounced the hypocrisy and immorality of the religious leaders in His day.
 - 2. He was a man with deep religious convictions. Many think of religion as a crutch for women and children. Jesus showed that if life is to be meaningful, it must center around religion. He made it a habit to worship (Lk. 4:16) and to pray (Lk. 18:1).
 - 3. He was a well-rounded man. He grew "*in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men*" (Lk. 2:52). He grew mentally, physically, spiritually and socially.
 - 4. He was a man of great goodness. Peter said of Jesus, "*He went about doing good . . .*" (Acts 10:38). What a beautiful summary of His life!
 - 5. He was a man of obedience. He submitted to the will of the Father. He became "*obedient to the point of death . . .*" (Phil. 2:8). He offers salvation to those who obey (Heb. 5:8,9).

III. WHAT THEN SHALL I DO WITH JESUS? Matt. 27:22a

- A. For almost 2,000 years, people of every race, culture and nationality have been confronted with this question.
- B. A look at the way others responded to Jesus will help us to clarify our own response.
 - 1. The mob's answer: "Crucify Him!" (Matt. 27:22). The very people Jesus came to save nailed Him on a cross (Jn. 1:11). Some today are still saying in their hearts, "Crucify Him!" They are trying to kill His influence in their lives (Heb. 6:4-6).

2. Judas' answer: "Sell Him!" (Matt. 26:14,15). Some still sell Him – to be popular with the crowd, for material things, to satisfy the lusts of the flesh.
3. Peter's answer: "Deny Him!" (Matt. 26:69-75). We can deny Him by teaching or promoting false doctrine (II Pet. 2:1), by the way we live (Tit. 1:16), or by refusing to confess Him to our friends and neighbors (Matt. 10:32,33).
4. Pilate's answer: "Dodge Him!" (Matt. 27:24). Pilate wanted to be neutral. He didn't want to take responsibility for Jesus or think about Him. But neutrality is opposition (Matt. 12:30).
5. The soldier's answer: "Mock Him!" (Matt. 27:27-31). Jesus is still held up to ridicule and mockery within the halls of our colleges and high schools, in books and newspapers, on T.V., and in movies. Many who do not mock Him directly still mock what He stands for.
6. The disciples' answer: "Forsake Him!" (Matt. 26:56). Many start out to live for Christ and then, like Demas, turn back (II Tim. 4:10). Many in the church forsake their duties and responsibilities (Heb. 10:25).
7. The women's answer: "Follow Him to the end!" (Matt. 27:55,56). At one time huge crowds had followed Jesus (Lk. 12:1). But in the end, the thousands had dwindled to just a handful. It is not so hard to follow Jesus in the company of others. But the real test of discipleship is whether or not we can keep living for Jesus when we have to do it alone.

C. Some day this question will be reversed. Instead of "What will I do with Jesus?" it will be "What will HE do with me . . .?"

Conclusion:

- A. These crucial questions demand an answer.
 1. It is impossible to evade Christ.
 2. You may choose to love Him or hate Him, but you cannot merely ignore Him.
- B. It has been almost 2,000 years since he lived on earth, but He must still be reckoned with.
 1. We can read about Carlemagne or Caesar or Napoleon without feeling that we are personally concerned. But it is not so with Christ.
 2. He grips our attention, challenges our thinking, and demands that we do something about Him.

3. We must come to a decision . . . about who He is . . . about what He wants . . . about what we will do with Him.

***"I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST"
(Rev. 1:11).***

LESSON 3

THE HINGE OF HISTORY

I Cor. 15:1-4

Introduction:

- A. Christianity centers around the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.
 - 1. In a sense, the events surrounding the cross are "the hinge" of ages on which human history pivots.
 - 2. The cross and the empty tomb lie at the very heart of the gospel story! (I Cor. 15:1-4). They are the "good news" we have been sent to tell the world!

- B. The New Testament gives great emphasis to Calvary and its aftermath.
 - 1. One-fourth of Luke is taken up with Christ's death and resurrection, one-third of Matthew and Mark, one-half of John.
 - 2. This is unlike the emphasis in the biographies of mere men.
 - a. Durant's 872 page The Age of Napoleon devotes only four pages to His death.
 - b. In the lives of great men, death is treated as a tragic end; with Christ, death is the main event. The resurrection alters everything!
 - c. Let us note the impact of Christ's death and resurrection upon the world.

Discussion:

I. WHY DID CHRIST DIE?

- A. To fulfill Old Testament prophecy (Psa. 41:9; Zech. 11:12; Isa. 53:7; Psa. 22:16,18; Psa. 34:20).
- B. To fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17,18). When Jesus went to the cross, the jurisdiction of the law ended (Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:4).
- C. To seal the new covenant (Matt. 26:28). In Biblical times, covenants (or contracts) were sealed by the blood of a sacrificial animal. The new covenant could not become effective until it had been sealed by Christ's blood (Heb. 9:16,17).

- D. To establish the Church. (Acts 20:28). The purchase price of the church was the shed blood of Christ. It was His death which made the church possible.
- E. To ransom men from Satan (I Tim. 2:6). Those who commit sin are the slaves of sin (Rom. 6:16). Sin gives Satan control over the sinner's life (Rom. 6:12). On the cross, Jesus paid the ransom which allowed Satan's captives to go free!

II. THERE IS POWER IN CHRIST'S BLOOD

- A. The blood of Christ justifies (Rom. 5:9).
 - 1. "Justify" in the original language is a legal term which means "to pronounce one to be just, righteous, or guiltless."
 - 2. It refers to the dismissal of charges "just as if I" had never sinned.
 - 3. The meaning of justification is illustrated in the parable of the servant who owed his master 10,000 talents. He could not repay his master, but his master wrote off the debt (Matt. 18:23-27).
 - 4. Though we stand guilty of sin in the sight of God (Rom. 3:23) He is willing to grant an acquittal on the basis of Christ's blood.
- B. The blood of Christ redeems (I Pet. 1:18,19; Col. 1:14).
 - 1. The word "*redeem*" means "to buy back – to liberate by the payment of ransom."
 - 2. It carries with it the idea of being released from bondage by the payment of a price (especially with reference to slaves and prisoners of war).
 - 3. Redemption is illustrated in the Old Testament by Hosea's payment of silver and barley for his wife, Gomer, when her adulteries had reduced her to slavery (Hos. 3:2).
- C. The blood of Christ reconciles (Eph. 2:13-16; Rom. 5:11).
 - 1. The Greek word which is translated "reconcile" literally means "to return into favor with, to cease to be offended, to make friends again."
 - 2. It suggests the healing of a ruptured relationship as in the case of the prodigal's return to his father (Lk. 15:17-24).
 - 3. Sin separates and alienates man from God. (Isa. 59:1,2). But Christ returns us to God's favor by the shedding of His blood.

4. The process of reconciliation is called "atonement" (Dan. 9:24; Rom. 5:11). Atonement is a contraction of the phrase "at-one-ment" – the idea being that we are made to be one with God.
- D. The blood of Christ cleanses (I Jn. 1:7).
1. "Cleanse" comes from the Greek word which means "to clean, purge, purify."
 2. Sin defiles; it stains, corrupts, contaminates and spoils.
 3. But the blood of Christ has the power to purge the soul of sin. (Isa. 1:18). Note: How do we obtain the benefits that are made possible by the blood of Christ? Christ died for all, but not all will accept what Christ did at Calvary. They refuse the benefits of the blood. To obtain those benefits, we must be baptized into Christ's death (Rom. 6:3,4).

III. HE AROSE AGAIN!

- A. A man stood looking at a touching picture of the crucifixion in a store window. Nearby was a ragged little boy who gazed at the picture in rapt attention. Wondering if the boy really knew what it was all about, he asked, "Sonny, what does it mean?" "Don'chu know?" the boy answered. "That there man is Jesus and them others is Roman soldiers. The woman who's acronym is His mother, and . . . they killed Him." The man turned to walk away, but a moment later he heard pattering footsteps behind him. The boy tugged at his coattails and said breathlessly: "Say mister! That ain't all! I want you to know He rose again!"
- B. Jesus was declared to be *"the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead"* (Rom. 1:4).
1. If the resurrection did not take place as reported, then Christianity is a cruel hoax and *"we are of all men most miserable"* (I Cor. 15:19).
 2. If the resurrection falls, the whole Christian system goes down with it.
- C. But the resurrection will stand the test! The evidence is overwhelming! God wants us to know that Jesus rose again!

IV. EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION

- A. The testimony of the prophets.
1. On Pentecost, Peter quoted from Psalms to prove that the resurrection had been predicted by David 1,000 years before the event (Acts 2:31).

2. Paul quoted the same passage from Psalms 16:8-11 in proof of Christ's resurrection (Acts 13:35).
3. Jesus Himself predicted His own resurrection beforehand (Jn. 2:19) and after His death, even His enemies remembered His promise to rise again (Matt. 21:62,63).

B. The testimony of the eyewitnesses.

1. The risen Christ was seen by more than 514 reliable witnesses (I Cor. 15:5-8).
2. In court, the quality of a witness' testimony depends on several factors:
 - a. Competency – these were not wild-eyed visionaries or dreamers, but plain, down-to-earth fishermen, farmers, tax-collectors, and doctors.
 - b. Reliability – the world has never known a people with higher standards of honesty, morality, and ethics than those early Christians.
 - c. Accessibility – they were in a position to know the facts. No one had been more closely associated with Christ.
 - d. Objectivity – no personal gain ever came to the witnesses. They knew only earthly loss, deprivation, and persecution. They sealed their testimony with their own blood.

C. The testimony of the empty tomb.

1. There is no doubt that the tomb was empty after the third day -- even Christ's enemies admitted this (Matt. 28:13-15).
2. How did it come to be empty? There are just three possibilities:
 - a. Christ's friends removed the body. How did they bypass the stone, the seal, and the soldiers? Why die for a lie? Men do not fearlessly die for a fraud! The blood of the martyrs is proof of the resurrection.
 - b. Christ's enemies removed the body. This would have been against their own best interest. If they had done so, why did they not produce the body when word got about that Jesus had been raised?
 - c. God removed the body. This is our faith! It is the only explanation which accounts for all the facts. There is no other possibility. The empty tomb demands a risen Savior!

- D. The testimony of the scholars.
1. Two famous English skeptics, Gilbert West and Sir Edward Littleton, set out to prove that the resurrection was a hoax. They each researched the question independently for a year's time. At the end of the period, they met to compare findings only to discover that they both had become firm believers as a result of their research.
 2. Recently, Paul Maier, Professor of History at Western Michigan University, wrote a book examining the evidence supporting the resurrection in which he concluded that, "No shred of evidence has yet been discovered in literary sources, epigraphy (inscriptions on monuments), or archaeology that would disprove the fact of the empty tomb."

E. THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION

1. The resurrection offers proof of Christ's divinity.
 - a. The sonship of Jesus is founded upon His resurrection (Rom. 1:4).
 - b. For claiming to be God's Son, Jesus was crucified; the resurrection proves the justness of His claim (Jn. 2:19).
2. The resurrection offers proof of our own salvation.
 - a. The sonship of the Christian is also founded on the resurrection (I Cor. 15:17; Rom. 4:24).
3. The resurrection offers proof of God's sovereignty.
 - a. The resurrection was an act of God (Acts 2:24; Acts 3:15; Acts 13:30).
 - b. With His Son on a cross, it seemed as though God was in retreat, but then came the glorious victory of the resurrection.
4. The resurrection offers proof of our immortality.
 - a. The resurrection of Christ proves that one day we, too, will be raised (I Pet. 1:3).
 - b. On a tombstone in an old cemetery, upon which the name can no longer be read, are these words: "You think I'm forgot, but I'm not!" The resurrection assures that God will never forget us – we are immortal (I Cor. 15:53,54).

Conclusion:

- A. *"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who are asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20).*
1. We can share in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3,4).
 2. In the act of baptism, we are raised with Christ (Col. 2:12).
- B. What a difference it makes that the one who died for us was raised again!
1. In some parts of Africa, when a man is dying, the witch doctor puts a dead bone in his hand as a passport into the other world. The Christian holds, not a dead bone, but the living hand of the risen Savior!
 2. Christ died for us and is risen again; we need have no fear.
 3. Have you been raised with Christ?

LESSON 4

JESUS IS LORD! Philemon 2:5-11

Introduction:

- A. The Greek word *KURIOS* is found well over 600 times in the New Testament.
 - 1. Though it is used in a variety of ways, it is generally translated as "Lord."
 - 2. It is used most commonly in the New Testament with reference to Christ.
- B. The early church gave great emphasis to the Lordship of Christ.
 - 1. In a sense, the expression "Jesus is Lord" was a one word summation of the faith of the early Christians.
 - a. The confession of Jesus as Lord is a necessary element of salvation (Rom. 10:9).
 - b. The theme of apostolic preaching was Jesus as Lord (II Cor. 4:5).
 - c. In his heart, the Christian must honor Jesus as Lord (I Pet. 3:15).
 - d. The moment is coming when every tongue will confess Jesus as Lord (Phil. 2:11).
 - 2. What does it mean to refer to Jesus as our Lord? What is really involved in the statement: "Jesus is Lord?"

Discussion:

I. A LOOK AT THE GREEK WORD FOR "LORD": *KURIOS*

- A. *KURIOS* is a title of respect. It is a title of courtesy and honor. In the Parable of the two sons in Matthew 21, one son answered the father's request that he go work in the vineyard by saying, "I will, sir" (Matt. 21:30). The word for "sir" is *KURIOS*.
- B. *KURIOS* is a title of ownership. It was the common word used to refer to the master of a slave. Ephesians 6:5 commands slaves to be obedient to their masters. The Greek word used for "masters" is *KURIOS*.
- C. *KURIOS* is a title of headship. It was the word used to describe the head of a household or family. Among the Greeks, a father's authority over his family was expressed by calling him *KURIOS*.

KURIOS is a title of authority. In Greek, the word was used with reference to those who had the right to make military decisions in time of war; to those who had the authority to render verdicts in court; and to those who had the authority to issue decrees and laws (Mk. 2:28).

- D. *KURIOS* is a title of majesty. By the end of the first century, *KURIOS* had come to be the regular title of the Roman emperor. Domitian repeatedly referred to himself in this way. This title appeared at the head of all laws, edicts, and decrees. It was also inscribed on Roman coins. *KURIOS* was the accepted title of imperial majesty.
- E. *KURIOS* is a title of divinity. In Roman and Greek mythology, the word *KURIOS* was regularly prefixed to the names of the gods and goddesses. In the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament), *KURIOS* is the word which is used to translate the name Jehovah. It is used this way in the New Testament at least 150 times (Lk. 2:9; Lk. 4:18).
- F. What we ought to mean when we call Jesus Lord is plain. We ought to mean that He is the absolute owner of our lives and that we are His slaves. We ought to mean that He is head of the great spiritual family of which we have become members. We ought to mean that He has absolute authority over every thought, emotion, and action of our life. We ought to mean that He is the King and Emperor to whom we give our constant allegiance, homage, and loyalty. We ought to mean that He is, in the words of Thomas, "*both Lord and God*" (Jn. 20:28).

II. SUBMITTING TO THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

- A. It is not enough merely to say, "Jesus is Lord;" the Lordship of Christ must make a difference in our lives (Lk. 6:46).
 - 1. Jesus said, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21).
 - 2. We cannot afford to take the Lordship of Jesus lightly.
- B. How do we submit to the Lordship of Jesus?
 - 1. By the way we live. The fundamental difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is that a Christian lives for Christ, while a non-Christian lives for self (Phil. 1:21). What are you living for? Some live for pleasure: "high living", good times, partying, and self-indulgence. Some live for money: material possessions, clothes, stereos, cars, and other "things". Some live for power, some for popularity, and some for lust. But the Christian lives for Christ (Gal. 2:20; Matt. 6:33).
 - 2. By the way we make use of our bodies. Paul was determined to use his body to honor Christ.

- a. In the area of modesty (I Tim. 2:9). Do mini-skirts, short-shorts, etc. honor Christ? Do beauty contests, drill-team uniforms, etc. honor Christ? What about sloppiness and carelessness in dress?
 - b. In the area of purity (I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:22). Does immorality, adultery, and pre-marital sex honor Christ? What about petting, dancing, and lasciviousness? (Cf. Gal. 5:19-21).
 - c. In the area of drug abuse is Christ honored by drinking alcohol, smoking, and the illicit use of drugs? (I Cor.6:19,20).
3. By the name we wear religiously. If Christ is our Lord, then we should honor Him by what we call ourselves religiously. How can we honor Christ if we wear the names of men? Christ's name is the most honorable name in creation (Matt. 28:18). There is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12). When we wear any name but His, we compromise our loyalty to Christ.
 4. By the way in which we seek to worship. As our Lord Jesus commands, worship *"in spirit and in truth"* (Jn. 4:24). That means we have a right to do in worship what our Lord has authorized and no more. All authority belongs to Christ (Matt. 28:18). To do more or less than Christ has authorized is to disregard His authority. We must *"speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent."*
 5. By remembering Christ's memorial (I Cor. 11:23-25). Christ has specifically requested that we come together weekly for the purpose of commemorating His death and suffering at Calvary. In partaking of the Lord's Supper, we submit to the Lordship of Christ. If we forsake the assembly and neglect the Supper, then we dishonor Christ.
 6. By the way in which we obey. Jesus is the *"author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him"* (Heb. 5:9). As Lord of our lives, Christ has the right to command our obedience. We have no right to call Him "Lord" if we refuse to obey him (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46). What does He command?
 - a. Faith (Jn. 8:24).
 - b. Repentance (Lk. 13:3).
 - c. Confession of faith (Matt. 10:32).
 - d. Baptism (Mk. 16:16; Matt. 28:19,20).
 - (1) In the act of baptism, we are to submit to the Lordship of Christ. We acknowledge His sovereignty over our lives!

- e. Faithfulness (Rev. 2:10).

III. DO WE REALLY MEAN IT?

- A. The word "Lord" as we have seen is a one-word expression of complete devotion . . . of reverence and adoration, of surrender and submission.
- B. There is a two-fold sense in which we must confess Christ as Lord.
 - 1. Initially in conversion (Cf. Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9,10). When we obey the gospel, we are to make public acknowledgment of Christ as our Lord. This simply means that we are totally surrendering to Him in total obedience to His commands. It signifies our absolute allegiance to His reign! Paul was referring to this confession made at the time of conversion when he told Timothy, "*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses*" (1 Tim. 6:12).
 - 2. Continually in daily living. It is our daily business in life to confess Jesus as our Lord both in word and deed, in conversation and conduct! This is the sense in which John uses the word in *1 John 4:15*: "*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*" Literally, "keeps on confessing" that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. The Bible describes this daily, continual expression of the Lordship of Christ as "*holding fast to your confession*" (Heb. 4:14; Heb. 10:23). In the early days of the church, there was a class of men and women who were called the "Confessors." These were the ones who had suffered physical persecution but were not killed (in contrast to the martyrs). In spite of threats, denunciations, and abuse, they continued to confess that Jesus is Lord! All of us should be confessors! Whatever it costs us, we should stand up and be counted for Christ; we must demonstrate everyday that embarrassment, rejection, ridicule, and opposition!

Conclusion:

Gracious Lord, My Redeemer
Prince of Peace, and Lord of all;
Thou for whom the world is waiting,
Humbly at Thy feet we fall.

Thou art Lord of all the living;
Thou art Lord of them that sleep;
Thou art Lord of all creation;
Teach me all Thy ways to keep.

Use my hands to do Thy bidding;
Take my voice to sing Thy praise;
Place my life in Thy love's keeping:
There to be through endless days!

LESSON 5

THE LORD IS COMING I Corinthians 16:22; Revelation 22:20

Introduction:

- A. There was an expression in constant use in the early days of the church which almost completely passed out of the modern vocabulary.
1. In our Bibles, it is usually written as a single word, *Maranatha*” but it originally was a two-word sentence in Aramaic – “*Marana Tha.*”
 2. “*Maranatha*” was the prayer, the promise, the persuasion, the passion, the password for the early Church.
 - a. It summed up the vital hope of Christians everywhere.
 - b. It was the common greeting or salutation among Christians; it was a way that Christians could identify each other without pagans being able to understand.
 - c. It was used at the end of written documents and scratched on the walls of catacombs.
 - d. It is probably that it was repeated in early Christian worship assemblies in the way we sometimes use “Amen” today; it was undoubtedly spoken in sermons.
- B. The expression is not easily translated into English.
1. It may be translated either “The Lord has come . . .” or “The Lord is coming . . .” or “O, Lord come . . .”
 2. For those early Christians, the second coming was not just a doctrine confidently believed; it was a hope eagerly awaited and an event for which they earnestly prayed!
 3. They never forgot that they were living between two comings of the Lord. They labored and endured and triumphed in that certain knowledge. It colored and shaped their lives every day. It had an impact on the way they thought and the way they conducted themselves.
 4. This is an emphasis we need to recapture!
 5. We are people with an appointment with a coming Lord! We ought to plan our lives and marry, go about our business and conduct our lives like people who have a rendezvous with Jesus!

Discussion:

I. JESUS WILL COME AGAIN!

- A. The fact that Jesus will one day return is one of the central doctrines of the New Testament.
 - 1. Three hundred and eighty times we are told in the Old Testament, *“He is coming . . .”* Three hundred and seventy times we are told in the New Testament, *“He is coming again . . .”*
 - 2. The one event referred to more than any other in the New Testament is the second coming. Baptism is mentioned 108 times; the Lord’s Supper is mentioned about 12 times, but the Lord’s return is mentioned 370 times.
- B. The truth of the second coming is taught in prophecy, in type, in symbol, and in parable. It is the “polar star of the church.”
- C. Throughout the New Testament, there are numerous references in unmistakable language to the indisputable fact that Christ will come again!
 - 1. *Acts 1:11: “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”*
 - 2. *Heb. 10:37: “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”*
 - 3. *I Cor. 11:26: “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.”*
 - 4. *Jn. 14:3: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*
 - 5. *Lk. 12:36: “And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.”*
- D. The doctrine of the second coming is not something which is incidental to faith – it is fundamental!

II. TENDING TO BUSINESS UNTIL CHRIST RETURNS

- A. In Luke 19:11-13, Jesus compared Himself to a king about to depart on a journey who gives a sum of money to his servants and says, “Do business with this till I get back . . .”

1. The Greek word for “do business” is *PRAGMATEOUMAL* (cf. Pragmatic) which means “engrossed in business” in a practical, commonsense way.
 2. Jesus has left us here to tend business for Him.
- B. How do we go about it?
1. Confessing Jesus as Lord. The first business of every Christian is to give voice to our faith in Christ, the Son of God and the Lord of life. (See Lesson 4, Point III, B).
 2. Disciplining the nations. Jesus told us to specifically go win converts for Him (Matt. 28:19,20). He has left us the job of getting the “good news” out! This is our business everywhere we go: in factories, businesses, homes, farms, hospitals, church buildings, schools, on trains, buses, airplanes, cars – everywhere!
 3. Destroying the works of the Devil (I Jn. 3:8). Every form of evil and unrighteousness must be suppressed in the name of Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:11; Rom. 12:9; Jas. 4:7). Every form of evil must be opposed: sexual immorality, perversion, obscenity, drunkenness, envy, gossip, false doctrine, superstition, disease, starvation, poverty, discrimination, racism, etc. It is our business to stand up and speak out against wickedness.
 4. Equipping the saints for ministry (Eph. 4:12). This is the work of teaching, strengthening and edifying our brothers and sisters in Christ so that we all might be better and more effective servants of our Lord (II Tim. 3:17). We must be involved in “on-the-job-training.” Christian education is part of the work He has left us to do!

III. ARE YOU READY?

- A. When Jesus returns, it is essential for us to be glad at His appearing.
1. I Timothy 4:8 speaks of “*all those who love His appearing.*”
 2. Early Christians prayed, “*O, Lord Come*” because first they confessed Jesus is Lord and obeyed Him as their Saviour! They believed, repented, confessed their faith, and were baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
- B. Tragically, many aren’t living as though they would be glad to see the Lord come!
1. Even many Christians have settled so comfortably into this world and have become so content with this alien land which is not our home that they would be reluctant for Christ to come.

2. For many that will be a day of dread! A day in which *“they shall call on the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the presence of Him who sits on the throne! (Rev. 6:16).*
- C. In the parable of the wise and foolish maidens, Jesus emphasized the importance of being ready for His coming (Matt. 25:6)!
1. One of these midnights the cry will be heard: *“Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (Matt. 25:6).*
 2. And then the only thing that will matter in the world is whether our lamps are burning for Him!
 3. The only way to be sure we’re ready on that day is to be ready every day.

Conclusion:

- A. There was a sense of expectancy in the early Church which we have somehow lost! We need to recapture it! We need to see our Lord’s second coming as something real . . . as something urgent . . . as something eagerly looked for and prayed for.
- B. The Lord has come! The Lord is coming! May God help us to pray, *“O, Lord, come!”*
- C. In one of his songs, Bob Dylan pictures His coming in these terms:

Truth is an arrow and the gate is narrow
 That it passes through . . .
 He’ll unleash His power, at an unknown hour
 That no one knew.
 How long can I listen to the lies of prejudice?
 How long can I stay drunk on fear out in the wilderness?
 Can I cast it aside – all these loyalties and this pride?
 Will I ever learn . . . ?
 That there’ll be no peace, that the world won’t cease
 Until He returns . . . ?

Surrender your crown on this blood stained ground
 Take off your mask!
 He sees your deeds – He knows your needs
 Even before you ask.
 How long can you falsify and deny what is real?
 How long can you hate yourself for the weakness you conceal?
 Of earthly plans, there’ll be no demand.
 He is unconcerned.
 He’s got plans of His own (to throw down all thrones),
 When He returns . . .

The Padded Cross

“Well, here I am, Lord.”

You said, “Take up your cross.”

“And I’m here to do it. It’s not easy, this self-denial thing. I mean to go through with it though. Yes sir, I bet YOU wish more people were willing to be disciples like me. I’ve counted the cost and surrendered my life . . . no it’s not an easy road . . .

You mind if I look over these crosses? I’d kind of like a new one. I’m not fussy you understand, but a disciple has to be relevant these days. I was wondering – are there any that are vinyl padded? I’m thinking of attracting others, you see, and if I could show them a more comfortable cross I’m sure I could win a lot more. Got to keep up with the population explosion and all. And I need something durable so I can treasure it always. Oh, is there one that’s sort of flat so it will fit under my coat? We should not be too obvious.

Funny, there doesn’t seem to be much choice here. Just that coarse, rough wood. I mean, that could hurt! Don’t you have something more distinctive, Lord? I can tell you right now, none of my friends are going to be impressed by this shoddy workmanship. They’ll think I’m a nut or something! And my family will just be mortified!

What’s that? It’s either one of these or forget the whole thing? But Lord, I want to be your disciple! I mean just being with YOU – that’s all that counts, but life has to have a balance too . . . but you don’t understand – nobody lives that way today.

Who’s going to be attracted by this self-denial bit? I mean, I want to, but let’s not overdo it! Start getting radical like this and they’ll have me to the funny farm . . . know what I mean?

I mean, being a disciple is challenging and exciting, and I want to do it, but I do have some rights, you know! Now let’s see. No blood – OK? I just can’t stand the thought of that, Lord . . . Lord? Now where do you suppose He went?”

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