

UPON THE ROCK

June 2002

Volume 5 Issue 6



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Upon the Rock is published monthly for the purpose of setting forth sound biblical material concerning first-principles and evangelism. We strive to print articles that are informative for Christians and non-Christians.

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WHO IS THIS JESUS?

Phil Gear

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets” (Matthew 16:13-14). Jesus was like no one else who had ever lived. His teachings, miracles, and lifestyle all created amazement everywhere he went. Over a dozen times the New Testament says the teachings and works of Christ “astonished” the people. It all contributed to mass speculation as to his identity. The guesses ranged from John the Baptist to the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah.

Jesus was an historical figure, and he made some amazing claims. “I am the Messiah” (John 4:26). “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). “I am the Son of God” (John 10:36). Could these be substantiated? Was he really who he claimed to be?

Throughout the New Testament people had to confront the question, “Who is this Jesus?” Regardless of the circumstances surrounding their encounter with him, the question could not be ignored. It had to be answered.

King Herod had heard some very unsettling rumors concerning Christ. What he was hearing was disturbing to say the least His guilty conscience drove him to one very upsetting possibility. Jesus must have been John the Baptist risen from the dead. He had had John executed unfairly. Could this be him resurrected? “And Herod said...who is this, of whom I hear such things?” (Luke 9:9). He had to find the answer to that question. Actually, when all is said and done, it is the only question that really matters.

A woman of Samaria had a disturbing conversation with Jesus. His insights into her life and thinking were beyond anything he could have known by normal means. She did not know him, but he sure knew her, and better than she wanted him to. After coming to grips with

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

10:00am We CAN Know what Constitutes Scriptural
Baptism

Barry Grider

11:00 am We CAN Know that There Are Some Whom Faithful
Christians Must Not Fellowship

Dub McClish

2:00 pm We CAN Know that There Is An Eternal Hell

Tim Nichols

3:00 pm We CAN Know that "Faith Only" Will Not Save

B.J. Clarke

7:00 pm We CAN Know We Are Saved

Eddie Whitten

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

10:00 am I John and "We CAN Know"

Dub McClish

11:00 am We CAN Know God's Marriage Law

Gerald Reynolds

2:00 pm We CAN Know that There Will Be A Bodily
Resurrection

Eddie Whitten

3:00 pm We CAN Know the Identity of the One Church

B.J. Clarke

7:00 pm We CAN Know that the Lord Will Return One Day

Barry Grider

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WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24-27

2. BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD

Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16

3. REPENT OF YOUR SINS

Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:3

4. CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36

5. BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR SINS

Acts 238; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4

6. LIVE FAITHFULLY UNTO DEATH

Revelation 2:10

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PAGE 3

who he was, she went and told those of her village, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29). There is that vital question again.

He had been born blind, but Jesus had miraculously restored his sight. Suddenly he found himself in the center of a storm of controversy. The city was in an uproar over his healing. The religious leaders had even interrogated his parents to find out what had happened. The debate raged and grew until he finally found himself an outcast. Jesus located him again and this time asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He replied with a question of his own, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" (John 9:35-36). That question just keeps coming up.

Although their motives were sinister, the question was valid. They were determined to condemn Christ to death, and were looking for a charge they could make stick. Could they trap him into convicting himself through his claims to be God?. "Art thou the Christ?" (Luke 22:67). "Art thou then the Son of God?" (Luke 22:70). They thought they were confronting him, but in truth he was confronting them. He answered their questions, and now they would have to face up to it. There is just no escaping that question.

The Roman governor, Pilate was in an awful situation. He was being pressured by the Jewish leaders to condemn Jesus, but to be honest he had to admit there was no evidence that Jesus deserved to die. He plainly told the Jews, "I find no fault in him." But they responded, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Now Pilate really was worried. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou?" (John 19:7-9). He had already asked Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" (John 18:33). He just could not avoid the question, "Who is this Jesus?"

Saul of Tarsus hated Christians. How could they possibly have left the Jewish religion he loved so much? As far as he was concerned they had become followers of that man of Nazareth who had so deceived the people. Such betrayal of the Jewish faith deserved the severest of

punishments. He was not satisfied to go after only those Christians in Jerusalem, he would chase them to foreign cities (Acts 26:11). On one such journey he was approaching the city of Damascus, but was suddenly overwhelmed by a bright light from heaven. His entire life changed when a voice spoke to him out of the light, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul could only answer, "Who art thou, Lord?" (Acts 9:4-5). He was encountering the Jesus he had so long denied, and now he had to deal with that critical question, "Who is this Jesus?"

None of us is immune from this decisive question. "Who is this Jesus?" Each of us, at some time or another, will have to grapple with this. Is he the Son of God? Is he the one who has the right to be our Lord? Will we allow him to be our Savior? Or will we go blindly through life ignoring him as so many try to do? Jesus asked his disciples who the world speculated him to be, but he was only leading them to confront the real question. "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15).

There is no doubt Jesus lived. There is too much historical evidence, both in the Bible and out of it for anyone to deny his existence. What will you do with the knowledge you have of him? Many will try to ignore him. Many will pay him lip-service, even claiming to recognize him as Lord, while in reality refusing him any say in their lives. Some will want him as a "spiritual rescue squad", expecting him to come running when they find themselves in trouble. Some will see him as vitally important when they die, but want nothing to do with him while they live.

One thing is certain. Once you are aware of his existence and claims you cannot remain neutral toward him. You must make a decision as to what you will do with him. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). There is no middle ground when it comes to this. At some point in your life you will answer the question, "Who is this Jesus?" If you do not answer it here on earth, you will answer it in his presence on the day of Judgment. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in

THE DATE HAS BEEN SET!

FOURTH ANNUAL
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THE GOSPEL JOURNAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN LECTURES THEME: "WE CAN KNOW." JUNE 23-26, 2002

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

9:00 am	We CAN Know the Truth	Lester Kamp
10:00 am	We CAN Know that the Bible Is the Word of God	Dub McClish
1:30 pm	We CAN Know that Sin Separates Man from God	Barry Grider
2:30 pm	We CAN Know that "the way of man is not in himself" (Jeremiah 10:23)	Tim Nichols
6:00 pm	We CAN Know that God's Word Is the Standard By Which All Men Will Be Judged	Gerald Reynolds

MONDAY, JUNE 24

10:00 am	We CAN Know what Acts of Worship Please God	Tim Nichols
11:00 am	We CAN Know that It Is a Sin to Worship God Using Mechanical Instruments of Music.	Eddie Whitten
2:00 pm	We CAN Know that Christians Are to Partake of the Lord's Supper and Give Upon the First Day of Every Week.	Gerald Reynolds
3:00 pm	We CAN Know that Denominationalism Is Sinful	Lester Kamp
7:00 pm	We CAN Know that Salvation Is ONLY in Christ's Church	B.J. Clarke

were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone” (Romans 9:30-32).

The facts of the case were clear — regardless of Israel’s previous expectations, the Gentiles had “obtained to righteousness” and the Hebrews, while pursuing the law of righteousness by works of the law, had come up short. Some legitimately misunderstood the purpose of the law while others were blinded by national pride (a nice way of saying prejudice). God’s instructions were clear but some did not want to hear. Rather, they chose to stop their ears and close their own eyes (cf. Matthew 13:15 & Isaiah 6:9-10).

Like a bullet to the head, they committed spiritual suicide by refusing to hear the voice of the prophets. They had stumbled at the tried and precious stone that God laid in Zion (Romans 9:32, 33 & Isaiah 28:16). Pride prevented their acceptance of the simple plan of salvation crafted by God from eternity and intended for all men. Truly the simple things had become the source of their bewilderment, and sadly enough, the loss of their souls.

RENOUNCE PRIDE AND BECOME A PART OF GOD’S ISRAEL

Pride can stand in the way of obeying the gospel. Don’t allow it to condemn your soul. “Whoever believes Him will not be put to shame.” (Romans 9:33). “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:26-29).

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earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

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JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

Brent Gallagher

The term “son of God” is used many ways in Scripture. In Job 2:1 the angels are called the sons of God. Adam, the first man, is referred to as the son of God in Luke 3:38. God refers to the nation of Israel as “my son, my first-born” in Exodus 4:22. In the New Testament Christians are referred to as sons of God (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1). But the phrase “son of God” is used in a special sense when it refers to Jesus.

First, the fact that Jesus is the Son of God means that Jesus is divine. Jesus stated in John 5:23 *“that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”* Elsewhere, Jesus stated that He and the Father were one (John 10:30). Jesus, like the Father and the Holy Spirit, is divine.

Second, Jesus as God’s Son also involved His being the Messiah. In Matthew 16 Jesus asked His disciples who men thought He was. They responded by saying some thought He was *“John the Baptist some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets (verse 14).”* Jesus then asked the disciples who they thought He was. Simon Peter answered Jesus and says, *“You are the Christ the Son of the living God (verse 16).”* The Christ was the Messiah or “anointed one” of Old Testament prophecy. Jesus perfectly fulfilled these prophecies as God’s Son.

Third, being the Son of God, Jesus has all authority. *“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the*

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20). In this passage Jesus states that He has all authority in heaven and on earth and that disciples are to be taught everything He commanded. The church recognizes that authority when it submits to the teachings of Christ.

Fourth, God has given Jesus, as the Son of God, the right to execute judgment John 5:22 states *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”* There are other passages in the New Testament which teach that Christ will be our judge. Second Corinthians 5:10 says *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* Also, the Apostle Paul states that God *“has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained (Acts 17:31).”*

Fifth, Jesus gives life as the Son. In John 5:21 Jesus says *“For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.”* Christ also states in John 10:10 *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”* The life to which Jesus is referring is spiritual.

What can be learned from the biblical doctrine of Jesus as the Son of God? It is obvious from these passages that Jesus has a special relationship with the Father. Jesus, like the Father, is eternal. Jesus, like the Father, has all the attributes of deity. Jesus was not just a prophet, a good man, or a philosopher who lived on this earth. Jesus was actually God in the flesh and this is reflected in the concept of Jesus as God’s Son.

The authority of Jesus also is recognized from this concept of Him being God’s Son. We should only do that which Jesus has authorized. Paul states it this way in Colossians 3:17 - *“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”* There are many in the religious world

ISRAEL’S FAILURE WASN’T DUE TO A FAILURE (UNRIGHTEOUSNESS) ON GOD’S PART

Perhaps some would charge God with wrongdoing in this scheme. Some even thought that God had failed to deliver on His promises. Paul makes short work of any such thoughts! *“But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect (Romans 9:6a). The shortfall wasn’t on God’s side! The miscarriage in justice was in the fact that the vessels were telling the potter how they should be made (Romans 9:20-21). The proverbial tail was wagging the dog! God’s righteous intent should first and foremost be subject to God’s explanation. If there was question about His intent from of old, then shouldn’t He be allowed to explain?”*

However, the Hebrews were going about to establish their own righteousness (Romans 10:3), without the benefit of asking God what He had meant by His actions in the previous dispensations. Could that be justly called a failure of God’s word? Hardly, any more than my ability to put my gas grill together without reading the instructions should be called a failure of the manufacturer!

God was not to blame for their misconceptions or for the implications of these misconceptions. After all, He had specifically told of the salvation of a remnant (Romans 9:27 & Isaiah 10:20ff). If a remnant was to be saved, what does that imply of the larger portion? God never promised to save every Israelite. Such an idea had not come from scripture! Had he not prophesied of the salvation of the Gentiles? Yes, truly He had!! Hosea for one had foretold of God’s acceptance of a people *“who were not my people”* (Romans 9:25 & Hosea 2:23), and Isaiah had certainly spoken of the salvation of those outside the bloodline of Israel (Romans 9:27-29).

THE FAILURE WAS IN THE HEARERS

Note a pivotal statement by Paul: *“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it*

ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO ATTAIN

Of course, Paul was proud of his heritage. He was, in his own words, "...circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Philippians 3:5-6). However, even if all of Israel had shared in Paul's zeal and fervor, they still would have come up short concerning God and righteousness. That was the source of Paul's grief!

Righteousness was not a commodity to which the Hebrews had exclusive rights. Or to put it as Paul did, "...they are not all Israel who are of Israel..." (Romans 9:6b). Some Israelites were not "of Israel" and some who were "of Israel" were not Israelites. If this sounds like double-talk, the context clears up his meaning. Paul is simply saying what we've already said: It was never God's intent to restrict His promised blessings to Israel. Any thoughts to the contrary had been ill founded. The promise was not "to Isaac's seed," but the promise said, "... in Isaac your seed shall be called" (Romans 9:7). Two fundamental errors or misconceptions were formed from this calling: First, that there was something inherently better about Isaac and his seed that would cause God to choose that line. Secondly, that the promised blessing would be restricted from the Gentiles.

Paul refutes these misconceptions by reminding his readers that Jacob (Israel) was chosen before his birth. Therefore the selection of Israel had nothing to do with the goodness of the Hebrews, but rather it was a sovereign act of God solely to fulfill "the purpose of God according to election" (Romans 9:11). If a scheme of redemption was to unfold with prophetic proofs such as it did, God had to choose some and, by default, refuse some; not choose to eternal life or condemnation, but rather choose as a part of the prophetic scheme by which the later promises would come. That was the basic flaw in Israel's thinking. Their choice was not to salvation, but merely to fulfill God's purposes in prophecy as He wove the intricate tapestry for the scheme of redemption revealed throughout Old Testament history.

who ignore this truth and use false standards of authority. Tradition, feelings, learned men, popular opinion, and family are just some of the false standards used. The result of using these standards is religious division. If everyone recognized the authority of Jesus religious division would be non-existent Then would be realized Jesus' prayer in John 17:21 where He desired that "they all may be one."

The authority of Jesus carries over into the fact that He will be our judge. We are not left wondering what the criterion for judgment is. Christ stated in John 12:48 that "*the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*" A popular view of Jesus is that he is kind, compassionate and tolerant of almost anything one does or says. Even though Jesus was a kind and compassionate person, He also denounced sin and was intolerant of certain attitudes and actions. It is imperative that we study our Bibles and get an accurate picture of who Jesus was and what he demands from us. After all, it is He who will be our judge.

Finally, Jesus as the Son of God offers eternal life. As a matter of fact Jesus lovingly invites everyone to enjoy this life. He said in Matthew 11:28-30 - "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*" This life is made available through our obedience to Jesus. Jesus stated in Mark 16:16 "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*" Have you believed and been baptized?

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JESUS, THE SON OF MAN

Larry McKenzie

There is a song that our young people like to sing from time to time called *He Is My Everything*. In this song is a phrase that says, "some

folks may ask me, some folks may say: Who is this Jesus you talk about everyday?" I would ask each of us, Who is Jesus?

The Bible refers to Jesus Christ in several ways. One of the terms by which He is known is THE SON OF MAN. This phrase refers to the humanity of Jesus. The New Testament clearly shows that He was human.

Some 80 times in the New Testament the gospel records Jesus calling Himself the son of man. For example, notice John 8:40, where He says, "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." In Acts 2:22 it is recorded that Peter said, We men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye your-selves also know." Paul told those in Athens, "And the time of this ignorance God winked at but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31). Paul also told Timothy, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). Many other examples could be noticed.

John said, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). There are countless examples of His manifestation of human traits. Jesus did not look different from any of us. There were times when He got hungry: "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered" (Matthew 4:2). There were times when He became thirsty: "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus said unto her, Give me to drink" (John 4:7). There were times when He became sleepy: "But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy" (Luke 8:23). There were times when He was sorrowful: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause I came unto this hour" (John 12:27).

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF UPON THE ROCK

THEME: COMPLIMENTS OF GOD

1. God's Compliment to Abraham: I Know He Will Command His Children by Phil Grear
2. David—A Man After God's Own Heart by Larry Reynolds
3. Meek Moses by Edd Sterchi
4. My Servant Job by Patrick Morrison
5. Mary: The Highly Favored Woman by Brandon Britton
6. The Noble Bereans by A.J. Cox
7. Revelations from Romans by Jim Bullington

Be looking for this issue in July! Thanks to all of our readers for the support you give *Upon the Rock* by reading the paper and giving it to others. We appreciate you!

REVELATIONS FROM ROMANS

The Revelation of God's Israel

Jim Bullington

I see lots of patriotic signs now about America, Pride in America. One in particular I saw the other day said, "America - The House that Pride Built!" National pride isn't new. Nor is there anything wrong with pride in our nation so long as it is kept in proper perspective. The Apostle Paul was proud of his heritage and his nation. However, there was a constant pain in his heart due to Israel's rejection of the gospel. Catch a glimpse of his sorrow as he writes, "I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh who are Israelites (Romans 9:3-4). What was the source of Paul's grief? Why was this sorrow being experienced? How could it be stopped? Read on to consider these questions.

Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

The terms of the New Covenant were ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ, they are stipulated in the 27 books of the New Testament and they can be appropriated by obedient faith.

Other men in history have made claim to performing this task of mediation. But Jesus Christ is our only Mediator. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

CONCLUSION

Last month, Secretary of State Colin Powell visited the Middle East attempting to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians, whose ongoing conflict escalated into full-scale military operations this year. He failed. If two feuding parties have no will to "get along", there is no getting along.

It is God's will that every man and woman be reconciled to Him through the mediation work of Jesus Christ. It is up to man to accept the terms of the New Covenant.

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There were times when He shed tears. In what is often called the shortest verse in the Bible it is recorded that "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). The Hebrews writer said, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Hebrews 5:7). There were times when He became angry.

When Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, the Bible records, "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other" (Mark 3:5). There were times when He was tempted. In speaking about Jesus, the writer of Hebrews wrote, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). There were times when He suffered pain and agony, "Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him" (Matthew 27:26-31). After all of this, and even more abuse, Jesus was put to death. "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they break not his legs" (John 19:33). He was a man!

However, some denied His humanity. The problem is reflected in I John 4:2,3. John wrote: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." They did not believe He was human, that He was a man. There were some who said that when Jesus walked, He did not even leave any

footprints. He was sort of a phantom that floated around. But John said... “We saw him, touched him, listened to him, ate with him, and followed him.” He was a man!

But then the question comes to mind...Why? Why did God send His only begotten son to be born and to live in the flesh? Why did He live as a human, as a man? There are several answers to this question, but let us notice just two.

First of all, it was because this was the only way we could have ever known what God is like. We have never seen the Father. We could have never known what He was like unless Jesus had taken upon Himself human flesh. John wrote, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Jesus said in response to Thomas, “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him” (John 14:7).

Second, to provide us with an example of righteousness. To show us just how we are supposed to live as a child of God. “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps” (I Peter 2:21). He showed us the way. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). He took on flesh to set a perfect example for man.

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BRING FORTH A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME EMMANUEL, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:21- 23). Indeed, Jesus was born and lived in the flesh.

What does Jesus mean to you? Do you realize who He is? Do you believe that He came to this earth, was born in the flesh in order that He might reveal the heavenly Father to us and to show us how God wants us to live our lives? Have you made the decision to obey Him and to follow Him? If not, why not do so today?!

what happened. “So the people stood afar off, because Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was (Exodus 20:21).

Up on that mountain, God delivered His covenant with Israel. By later revelation, we learn a detail, that this covenant between God and Israel was “appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 4:19). God did not broker the covenant directly with Israel but the contact between them required mediation, a task managed, on the divine side, by the angelic order and on the human side, by Moses.

JESUS CHRIST

When Mary’s firstborn cried in the Bethlehem barn, the bridge between heaven and earth appeared. In the person of Jesus Christ, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Perfect mediation requires a mediator who is acquainted with, sympathetic to and passionate about, both parties of whom he is going between. In the breach between God and man, caused by sin, Jesus Christ is that perfect Mediator.

The Bible is explicit concerning the monopoly of Jesus in the business of this mediation: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (I Timothy 2:5,6).

The grounds for Christ’s intercessory work are identified as when He gave Himself a ransom for all. The New Testament library utilizes a variety of language to explain the transaction of the cross. And that library includes the language of mediation: “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

THE NEW COVENANT

We finish at another mountain quite unlike the first. “You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly

Proclaiming the great deeds of our Savior is the best message one could ever proclaim. Let us proclaim it together!

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JESUS IS OUR MEDIATOR

Brad Poe

I can remember, as a fourth-grader, being too shy to approach a girl in my class to ask her if she liked me. A note would not do, so I convinced my friend to ask her for me. Even ten year-olds understand mediation. And it happens in more sophisticated contexts than an elementary school playground. It happens in business to arbitrate contracts between labor and management, during war to negotiate terms for a ceasefire, and in the courts to negotiate a lawsuit between plaintiff and defendant. When two sides are fractured, a “go-between” who goes between is sometimes necessary to fix the fracture. The Bible reader, then, is not surprised to discover the idea of mediation to explain the work of Jesus Christ

THE OLD TESTAMENT

We begin at a mountain about 3500 years ago on the Sinai Peninsula where more than a million Hebrew refugees are sprawled out at a campsite (Exodus 19:2). Rising up behind them to a visible peak was Mount Sinai. God gave Moses these orders: “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people (Exodus 19:10,11).

Come down, He did. In the morning, unexpectedly, the sight of lightning and the sound of thunder mingled with the blare of a trumpet. Thick clouds quickly covered the mountain, that began to smoke and shake like a boiling furnace. The people were terrorized and begged Moses to intervene. “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die (Exodus 20:19), and that is

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JESUS IS LORD OF ALL!

Frank Higginbotham

On the day of Pentecost when the Apostle Peter spoke to the crowd of assembled Jews, he convinced them that they with wicked hands had crucified the Son of God. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). In the midst of this indictment Peter declared that instead of them bringing the work of Christ to an end, God had made this very same Jesus the Lord of all. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). What a shock this must have been to them. It prompted them to ask what they needed to do in order to be saved from their sins. They were told that they had to repent and be baptized in order to obtain the remission of past sins.

The Lordship of Jesus had been proclaimed by the Prophets of the Old Testament for many years. They should not have been surprised when this Lord came. The Apostle Peter explained that God had made

clear His plan to send Jesus since the world began. “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). He then explained that Moses had told the people he spoke to about the new prophet that God was to send. He also issued warning concerning those who would reject the authority of this prophet. “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, And all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:22-26).

The term Lord is defined as one who has great authority and power. When He speaks He does so with rightful authority and all must respect His words. Jesus affirmed that God gave Him authority over all things. “And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Paul explains the fact that the authority of Christ the Lord extends over all with but one exception. “For he hath put all things under his feet But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him” (I Corinthians 15:27). God wanted His Son to be exalted and respected above all. This is explained by Paul as the reason that God made Him the head of the church. “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). Jesus does not share this position with anyone. He alone has the first place over the church. The church does not function without instruction from its Head and the one God appointed Lord. If it were to do so this would amount to a rejection of His Lordship.

also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps” (1 Peter 3:21). The example that our Savior left was one of commitment Our Savior was committed to His Father. As the day of His crucifixion drew near our Savior pleaded, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus did not want to face the painful experience of death. He knew the punishment, the scourging, the mocking, and the pain that was involved. Even though He did not want to face that cross, he submitted to the will of His Father when He said, “Not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus spent His life growing up in the “shadow of the cross.” I imagine that Jesus grew up knowing passages such as Isaiah 53. He lived in a time where crucifixions were common capital punishment I imagine that Jesus once walked past a man being crucified. What did he think? Did he grimace in pain, as He would look up to a place that He knew He would be? We do not know. What we do know is that Christ suffered the cross for us.

Christ was an innocent man. Pilate knew that (Matthew 27:18, 23-24). Christ never sinned while He walked this Earth. “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15) Christ never sinned! Never! That is what makes him the perfect sacrifice. He was pure, holy, the only Son of God (John 3:16).

Jesus is our Savior because He is the only way to the Father. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6, *emphasis mine— CMG*) One must come through Christ to get to the Father. Why? The reason you must come through Christ is that He is the Mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 9:15). One must clothe himself in Christ through baptism (Galatians 3:27). We must be clothed in the Savior to be able to see the Father. Because in Christ we have redemption through His blood (Ephesians 2:7). In Christ we have obtained a better inheritance (Ephesians 2:11).

Our Savior gave us so many blessings (Ephesians 1:3). Should we not want to take these great things that our Savior has done for us and proclaim them. We need to tell others the great things the Lord has done (Mark 5:19). We need to tell others of our Saviors love for them.

Everyday I open my eyes I am thankful. Every time I arise to see the sun shining and spreading it's light on this Earth, I am thankful. When my daughter calls me dad, I am thankful. When I see my wife, I am thankful. As I open the Bible to read about what great things have been done for me by Jesus, I am extremely thankful. If there are words to describe a feeling that is beyond thankfulness, I feel them. The reason for my thankfulness and joy is Christ. He is my Savior.

Not only is Jesus my Savior, but He is the Savior to all of those who obey His Words. To those that are Christians, He is our Savior. The words of Christ are those words that will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). Jesus said that, "heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Since the words of Christ will judge us and will never pass away, we need to obey them. The words of Christ that we have were written that we might believe (John 20:30-31).

At the Transfiguration on the Mount a voice came out of the cloud and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. HEAR HIM!" (Matthew 17:5, *emphasis mine*—CMG) Why do you think that the voice of God told Peter, James, and John to listen to Christ? God wants us to listen to His Son because His Son has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). Christ came to this earth to seek and save those that are lost (Luke 19:10). His words are the words that we need to heed, follow, and obey to achieve a home with Him forever.

Without following the words of Christ, where would we be? Without Christ, where would we be? The answer is simple - lost. We would be lost without Christ. We would still be dead in our sins. We would be dead men walking. Because of Christ, we have been made alive. "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). We became alive through the waters of baptism (Romans 6:4). We have arisen to walk in newness of life. Our old man was crucified with Him (Romans 6:6). We become crucified with Christ, because he is our Savior. When we become crucified with Christ, Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20).

Christ lives in us because we are committed to Him. Christ has given us an example to follow. "For to this you were called, because Christ

Of course there are always those who do not want to find themselves under this authority and thus they rebel against the words spoken. When the Son of Man came into the world, He was rejected by His own. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12). The history of a rejection of God's appointed spokesman as seen in the accounts of the Children of Israel is seen as a picture of the rejection of the One God appointed Lord even today. The people on the day of Pentecost had a decision to make. They could either accept the One that the God of heaven had appointed Lord or they could reject Him. If they did accept Him they would be making Him the Lord of their lives and from this time forward the control of their thoughts and actions was given over to the Christ. This teaching is made clear in what they did following their decision on this day and also by subsequent instructions in God's Word. On the other hand they could reject His Lordship and bear the consequence of this decision. When Luke records the reaction to this decision, he states this: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). The fact that some gladly received the word suggests that there were also some who did not receive it gladly. Judging from the way things go today, there probably were many more who did not want to accept Jesus as Lord, than those who did. Note what is stated in regard to the obedient servants: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The affect of accepting Christ's Lordship is seen immediately. Their lives of obedience were begun at once!

The Christian understands that his life is given over totally to the Lord for Him to direct. Peter describes the Christian as a "peculiar person." This term is defined as being a people of God's possession. We belong to God and He directs our lives. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9).

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Jesus made it clear that we must accept His Lordship and deny ourselves. Our lives then will be controlled by the Lord. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Denying ourselves simply means that we submit our will to the will of Christ. From this point on He directs our lives. This surrender to the Lordship of Jesus is explained by Paul in this statement from Romans 12: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2). When we offer ourselves to the Lord, He then directs us in the paths of righteousness. Please notice that there is another person directing our lives at this time. The world is not our Lord and Master. We have surrendered ourselves to God. Jesus paid the price for our redemption and became our Lord when we accepted the will of God. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). The price for our redemption is great but both God and Christ were willing to pay it. It is not unreasonable for God to expect us to accept the Lord. With great gratitude and realizing that God did for us what we were unable to do for ourselves, we must order our lives after the instruction given by our Lord. Our worship, our love, our moral conduct and our efforts to go to heaven should be directed by Jesus who is Lord of all!

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JESUS IS OUR SAVIOR

Christopher M. Gallagher

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).