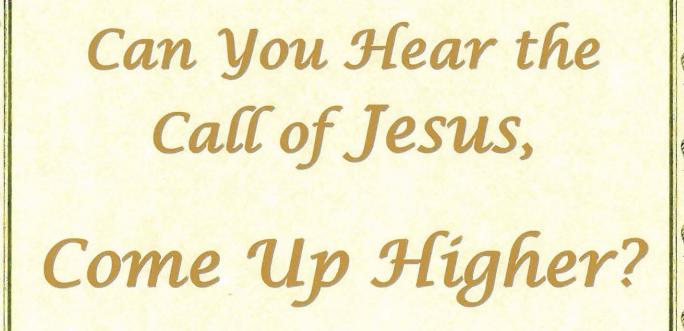
Teaching Notes (Unedited)

These notes are provided as a rough draft. It is our hope that they will aid you in your own personal edification and be helpful in preparation for leading a group bible study.



"Eternity is not a mere extension of time but a condition qualitatively different from time. The things eternal exist as much now as they ever will. We are as much living in eternity now as we ever shall be. The only difference will be that we shall then see Him who is now unseen, and realize the things which now are only visible to the eye of faith (II Cor 4:18)."

(Pulpit Commentary)

Week 1 of 6

Well of Life Ministries

Altha Burts

Oh what a day that will be when we see Him face to face!

How many of you know that Jesus is glorious? Ah, but did you know that because He is glorious 'in Himself' so is our salvation? You see, salvation is both an act and a state of being. Salvation is an 'act' on God's part and a 'state of being' on man's part.

Scripture teaches that Jesus is not only our Savior but He has become to us our salvation, our state of being, our life as new creations.

But do we know it?

Listen to the song of Moses and the children of Israel as they celebrated their passage through the Red Sea (which as we have heard tonight is a type of our own salvation).

"I will sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and the rider He has thrown into the sea! The Lord is my strength and song and He has become my salvation. He is my God (my Lord) and I will exalt Him" (Exodus 15:1-2)

The Lord 'Himself' has become our salvation: The Eternal self-existent One, The Alpha and the Omega, The high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy. The Glorified Christ described by John in the book of Revelation: One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girded about the waist with a golden band His head and hair are like wool, as white as snow and His eyes like a flame of fire His feet being like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace and His voice is like the sound of many waters whose countenance, John says, is like the Sun shining in full power at midday (Rev 1:13-18).

This One says to us, "Do not be afraid... I Am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I Am alive forevermore"... Not only living, but I Am the Source of Life to My people..."(Jamieson, Fausset, Brown).

JESUS HIMSELF is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25). The Glorified Christ has become to us salvation (Col 3:1-4).

Do we celebrate our salvation as the Israelites did when they crossed the Red Sea? Do we sing praises to Him for our new birth? Is there a continual heart gratitude for being given such a glorious new life?

If we do not, it may be that we just don't 'see' how glorious our Lord is and the salvation we share in Him. How many of you want to 'see' Jesus more clearly and the life we have in Him?

Me, too!

Jesus said to His disciples and He says to us, "When the Spirit of Truth comes He will guide you into all truth He will glorify Me, He will take of (draw upon) what is mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you" (John 16:13-14; Eph 1:17).

When the Spirit of Truth comes...

Did you know the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Glory? This is one of His names... the Spirit of Glory – I Peter 4:14 tells us this. Just as He is called in scripture the Spirit of Truth because He imparts truth to us (John 16:13) and the Spirit of Life because He imparts life to us (Romans 8:2) and He is also called the Spirit of Glory because He imparts the glory of Christ to us and we are transfigured into His very image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another (Amplified Bible; I Peter 4:14; II Cor 3:17).

You see, as we contemplate the glory of Jesus in the Word, the Holy Spirit takes the truth of the Word and causes it to become both spirit and life in us, we enter into the reality of the teaching itself.

Jesus says "the words I speak to you are spirit and life." His words become spirit and life in those who receive them in spirit (John 6:63). So you see, the Spirit of Glory progressively takes the things which are of Christ, transmits them to us and we grow by means of the impartation He gives us of the life of the Glorified Christ (II Cor 3:17).

Now I want to help bring us into an understanding of HOW these lofty truths are practically worked out in our own lives. A few questions asked at this point might engage our minds to think more analytically.

- By what **means** does this process take place?
- Is there **time** involved or does it happen right away?
- Do I have any **responsibility** in bringing this transformation about?
- Or, am I just a passive recipient?

Again, as always, we turn to the Word of God for direction. We find our answers in II Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-18. Paul says to us:

⁷But we have **this treasure** in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

⁸We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

¹⁰always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

¹¹For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

¹²So then death is working in us, but life in you.

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.

¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,

¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."

For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal..."

Let's focus on verse 18, "But the things which are not seen ARE eternal."

From the Pulpit Commentary we find:

"But the things which are not seen **are** eternal. This clause is important as showing that eternity is not a mere extension of time, but a **condition** qualitatively different from time. The 'things eternal' **exist** as much **now** as they ever will. We are as much living in eternity **now** as we ever shall be. The only difference will be that we shall then see Him who is now unseen, and 'realize' the things which **now are**... but only visible to the eyes of faith."

The truth is that as we operate in faith in the light we personally have on any eternal fact (found in the Word of God), we progressively witness its manifestation in and through our lives. This is the way truth is worked out in our lives, this is working out our salvation (Phil 1:9). This is the walk of faith and the means of our transformation.

Let me share a quote from Watchman Nee from his book What Shall This Man Do? Which will shed light on this for us:

"Christian progress is not a question of attaining to some abstract standard, or of pressing through to some far-off goal. It is wholly a question of 'seeing' God's standard. You advance spiritually by finding out what you really are, not by trying to become what you hope to be.

That goal you will never reach, however earnestly you strive. It is when you 'see' you are dead that you die; it is when you 'see' you are risen that you arise; it is when you 'see' you are holy that you become holy.

Seeing the accomplished fact determines the pathway to the realizing of that fact. The end is reached by 'seeing,' not by desiring or working. The only possibility of spiritual progress lies in our discovering the truth as God sees it; the truth concerning Christ, the truth concerning ourselves in Christ, and the truth concerning the Church, the Body of Christ."

You may be asking yourselves at this point if the way of spiritual progress and growth begins with 'seeing', how do I get there? How do I come to 'see' Jesus in His glory and experience life in the Glorified Christ?

Jesus shows us the way very clearly, He says,

"And anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." Matthew 10:38-39 NIV

Such a treasure of truth is found in this verse hidden below the surface, but nevertheless it is there. The Greek word 'find' here is in the middle voice meaning: to find for oneself, to gain, to procure, to obtain.

Pulpit says about this verse, "There may be in it a notion of something great and unexpected, 'a treasure to discover,' salvation far beyond all that they looked for!"

Are you ready to discover just how glorious Jesus is and your life in Him? Are you ready to go mining for these eternal 'treasures of truth' that are more real than anything your natural eyes can see? Are you willing to pay the price... not only in order to 'see' but to have these deeper truths become realized in your own life?

God says to us which encourages our pursuit, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." It is by The Holy Spirit's revelation alone that we come to **behold** these spiritual realities. And it is by His loving discipline and our cooperation with Him that we **enter** into them for ourselves. Our cooperation **is** our responsibility.

As Watchman Nee says,

"Without **revelation** by the Spirit we cannot commence the journey, but without the **discipline** of the Spirit we cannot complete it. Both these aspects of the Spirit's work are equally essential, but for both we can assuredly count upon Him.

Can you hear the Lord's call to us, His church, 'Come Up Higher'?

I want to show you My Glory!

If you are hearing His call, please join us on our journey through these eternal treasures of truth.

Our Lord is glorious and because 'He is glorious in Himself' ... so IS our salvation.

For Further Reflection:

THE SPIRIT OF GLORY
from The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit
by R. A. Torrey

THE NAMES OF CHRIST by Frances H. Derk

The Spirit of Glory

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit by R.A. Torrey

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of glory in 1 Peter 4:14: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." This name does not merely teach that the Holy Spirit is infinitely glorious Himself, but it rather teaches that He imparts the glory of God to us. Just as the Spirit of truth imparts truth to us and as the Spirit of life imparts life to us; as the Spirit of wisdom and understanding and of counsel and might and of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord imparts to us wisdom and understanding and counsel and might and knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and as the Spirit of grace applies and administers to us the manifold grace of God; so the Spirit of glory is the administrator to us of God's glory. In the immediately preceding verse we read, "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." It is in this connection that He is called the Spirit of glory. We find a similar connection between the sufferings which we endure and the glory which the Holy Spirit imparts to us in Romans 8:16, 17, RV: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." The Holy Spirit is the administrator of glory as well as of grace; or rather, He is the administrator of the grace that culminates in glory.

The Names of Christ By Francis H. Derk

JEHOVAH-JESUS

Jehovah-Saviour (Matt. 1:18-25). Prophesied (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:31; 2:21). "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Ps. 98:2; Isa. 42:6-7; 52:10; Luke 2:30-32; 3:6; 19:9; Rom. 10:12, 18).

In the name Jehovah, God is revealed in all the majesty, mystery, and magnitude of His redeeming self. Man, the crowning act of His creation, is alone able to understand and comprehend the Infinite and Eternal. According to His promises God reveals Himself in His redemptive names. Gradually unfolding in the passing years, they culminate in "Jehovah-Jesus." Thus the ultimate name is the name of Redemption.

Salvation is the great all-inclusive word in the Bible, and all that the names of Jehovah implied and revealed is seen here. The "ever becoming" "became," and is now the "same yesterday, today and forever." Some day Israel will see who Jehovah-Jesus really is and accept Him. See Isa. 12:1-6; 43:3; 45:21; Zech. 13:6; 14:16-21; Rom. 9:27; 11:12, 15, 25.

JESUS

The name Jesus is His prophetic, human name. It means 'Jehovah's Salvation,' or 'Jehovah Is Salvation,' or, 'Jehovah's Saviour' (Isa. 49:1; Matt. 1:21). Having this name was no accident (Luke 1:31; 2:21; Isa. 12:2; 45:1-4).

It is the name used in the Gospels, limited in the Epistles, and used over 700 times and in combinations expressive of Deity.

LIVING ONE

"I am the Living One" (Zao: Rev. 1:18; Rom. 6:9); Living Bread (John 6:1); Living Way (Heb. 10:20). See Mark 16:11; Luke 24:5; Acts 25:19; I Cor. 15:22; Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 10:6.

I AM

See God, Jehovah, Lord.

John 8:58. In the Old Testament deity is ascribed to the Messiah in that the names and attributes of Jehovah are seen (Ps. 45:6-7; 110; Zech. 2:10; 9:9; Matt. 22:41-45; Acts 2:34-35).

The Jews understood the claims of Jesus and would stone Him as a blasphemer (John 5:18; 10:30–33).

He was the "I AM" before Abraham (Ex. 3:14; Isa. 43:13; John 8:58; 17:5, 24; Col. 1:17; Rev. 1:8).

- 1. I Am from Above (John 8:23)
- 2. Beginning and Ending (Rev. 1:8)
- 3. Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48, 51)
- 4. The Door (John 10:7, 9)
- 5. First and the Last (Rev. 1:8; 2:8; 22:13)
- 6. Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14)
- 7. I Am He (John 4:26)
- 8. Light of the World (John 8:12)
- 9. He That Liveth (Rev. 1:18)
- 10. Lord and Master (John 13:13)
- 11. Meek and Lowly (Matt. 11:29)
- 12. King (John 18:37)
- 13. Resurrection and Life (John 11:25)
- 14. Way, Truth and Life (John 14:6)
- 15. True Vine (John 15:1, 5)
- 16. Christ, the Son of the Blessed (Mark 14:62)

FIRST

Protos. "First and the Last" (Rev. 1:11, 17; 2:8; 22:13). Proteuo. In all things the "preeminence," i.e., "first" (Col. 1:18). See Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. The Eternal, the source and sustainer, and to whom all returns (Eph. 1:10).

Protokos. "First begotten" (Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:6; 5:5). "First begotten of the dead" (Rev. 1:5).

"Firstborn" (Ps. 89:27; Zech. 12:10). "Firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18). "Firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15). "Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

Aparche. "Firstfruits" (I Cor. 15:23). Consult "firstfruits" in the Old Testament where an offering was made on behalf of the individual, or nation, as rightfully belonging to God. This was a token of their gratitude for His goodness (Ex. 23:19; Lev. 23:10–17; Deut. 26:1–11).

LIFE

See I Am. John 14:6.

He is the Life—physical, spiritual and eternal—and imparted all three (John 11:25; Col. 3:4; I John 1:2). Life is mentioned 133 times in the New Testament: 34 times in the Gospel of John, 11 times in I John, and 15 times in Revelation.

While the word "life" has many and varied meanings, the emphasis is definitely on spiritual and eternal life. It is more than endless existence, as this is true of the unregenerate. It is a distinct quality of life in and from Jesus Christ.

Zoe is the true, divine and immortal life (John 3:15-16; 6:27, 33, 40, 47). "In him was life" (John 1:4). This was Life of all life; pure and full; or "in him was the life." "It is said you cannot divide the idea of 'Zoe' into physical, spiritual, moral or eternal life. It is creative, the ultimate principle of life which manifests itself in the operations of life in every province."—Lange

He is the Creator and Sustainer of all life (Acts 17:28).

ETERNAL LIFE

Zoe is life that belongs to eternity and centered in Jesus Christ. It is more than endless existence, mere physical consciousness or any other created life. It is the impartation of the very life of Christ (II Pet. 1:3-4) which even physical death cannot touch or interrupt (I Thess. 5:10). Its final fruition and perfection will be realized in heaven (Rom. 2:7; II Cor. 5:4). Knowing Jesus Christ is in itself eternal life. To know Him is to experience Him (John 20:31). Zoe is mentioned 34 times in the Gospel of John and 11 times in First John and always in reference to Christ. His Gospel is more than a "life of Christ"; it is the Gospel of "life in Christ." In Him was Zoe—true, divine, eternal (John 3:15-16; 6:27-47; Matt. 7:14; 9:16). He said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

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References

All scripture is from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Complete Commentary from Hendrickson

The Names of Christ by Francis H. Derk

The Pulpit Commentary from Hendrickson

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit by R.A. Torrey

What Shall This Man Do? by Watchman Nee



The Firstborn from the Dead...
The Firstborn of Many Brethren

Revelation 1:5; Romans 8:29

"Jesus, Firstborn from the Dead... The First who was born to eternal life after the death that ends this life... the First to be raised to eternal glory" (Gaebelien/Clarke)

Week 2 of 6

Well of Life Ministries

Altha Burts

How many of you have come this evening positioned 'in spirit' to receive fresh insights from the Word of God? So have I!

Did you know we can expect the Holy Spirit to impart wisdom and knowledge to us as we honor Him as our Divine Teacher? It is true! For, He is the leader into all truth.

Jesus says, "When He, the Spirit of Truth has come, He will guide you into all the truth and He will honor and glorify Me because He will take of (receive, draw upon), what is Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you" (John 16:13-14 Amplified).

He is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17). He is the One, and only One who can lead *us* **into** the realities that are communicated to us in the Word of God (John 16:14; I Corinthians 2:6-16).

So lets move with Him this evening, out of time, and allow Him to impart to us an eternal perspective. As He does, we will come to understand more fully the eternal life that we, as Christians, possess.

We will begin in Genesis, in the Eternal past (if it can truly be called that) and then end in the book of Revelation that so beautifully unveils our Lord's fullness.

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God..." What powerful words! ... "In the beginning God!"

Let me share Arthur Pink's comments on this verse from his book, "The Attributes of God."

"In the beginning God..." There was a time, if "time" it could be called, when God, in the unity of His nature (though subsisting equally in three divine persons), dwelt all alone.

"In the beginning God..." There was no heaven, where His glory is now particularly manifested. There was no earth to engage His attention. There were no angels to hymn His praises; no universe to be upheld by the Word of His power. There was nothing, no one, but God; and that, not for a day, a year, or an age, but from everlasting!

During a past eternity, God was alone: self contained, self sufficient, and self satisfied, in need of nothing. Had a universe, had angels, had human beings been necessary to Him in any way, they also would have been called into existence from all eternity. The creating of them when He did, added nothing to God essentially. He changes not (Malachi 3:6), therefore His essential glory can neither be augmented nor diminished.

But as we know, His desire was to create a universe and create man in His own image... and so He did.

For scripture teaches us, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) Now many of us are familiar with this truth having to do with creation. Genesis teaches us that God simply spoke and the universe came into being. What a day that must have been!

But do we realize that the **supreme moment** of creation arrived as God created man? We find this in Genesis 1:26. God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Wycliff's comments on this passage:

"Let Us make man in Our Own image" presents God as calling on the heavenly court, on the other two Members of the Trinity, to center all attention on this event. The Lord is represented as giving unusual deliberation to a matter fraught with much significance.

So you see it is quite clear that man, as God made him, was **distinctly different** from the animals already created. He was a sublime creature! He stood on a much higher plateau, for God created him to be immortal and made him a special image of His own eternity.

Man became a living creature with whom His maker could visit and have fellowship and communion. We see this truth in Genesis 3:8, "Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day."

Can you image how it was for Adam and Eve to have such wonderful communion with their Creator? What a gift.

On the other hand, the Lord could expect man to answer Him and be responsible to Him. For man was 'constituted' to have the privilege of choice, even to the point of disobeying His creator.

Man was created in God's image and created to be God's responsible representative and steward of the earth to work out his Creators will, fulfill the divine purpose, to receive and reflect His glory, and to be obedient to his Creator.

Dominion over the Earth was to be granted to this sublime new creature (Gen 1:28; Psalm 8:5-7). He was commissioned to subdue (kabash – tread upon) the earth and to follow God's plan in filling it with people. He was given wonderful privileges and responsibilities, he was to live and move in **kingly** fashion.

God created mankind (the human race) to be His kingdom agent to rule and subdue the rest of the creation including all the aggressive satanic forces, which would soon infringe upon it. As a "living being," created in His image, mankind was destined to reveal the qualities of God - to manifest His glory. Commenting on this truth, Jack Hayford says:

As created in God's image, mankind – both male and female – were intended to live and reveal God in the world. Through mankind God intended to manifest **His**

character and authority (**His** image), express **His** dominion over the earth, display **His** indisputable power over the works of darkness, and subdue **His** arch enemy, Satan.

New Spirit Filled Life Bible (Genesis 1:26-28)

Then came the fall and we know that tragic story. Or do we? Genesis 2:16-17 tells us that God commanded the man saying, "of every tree of the garden you may eat freely but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in that day you eat of it you shall surely die."

Then we know what followed, at least we think we do.

The serpent came (Genesis 3:1). "Then the serpent said to the woman, you shall not surely die. For in that day you eat your eyes will be opened and you will be like God; knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Genesis 3:7 tells us, "They succumbed to sin... their eyes were opened... and they knew." But knew what? Wycliff comments on this truth:

The promise of the tempter was fulfilled quickly, instant perception was given. They saw and knew. But what they saw was far different from the rosy picture painted by the serpent.

Conscience was rudely awakened. They saw their nakedness, spiritual as well as physical. And shame and fear were born!

When Adam and Eve realized that they were 'out of touch' with God, a terrible **loneliness** overwhelmed them. Remorse and its inevitable miseries followed. This was never the way God intended to be.

Alienated from the Life of God. Ephesians says they became a 'man of flesh'. As Janet taught us this evening:

- They lost dependency linkage to God's life,
- Their relational closeness to Him had vanished,
- They lost access to His resources
- They lost dominion, and
- They were now independent creatures cut off:
 - Cut off from God's will
 - Cut off from His perfections
 - Cut off from His purity
 - Cut off from His power
 - Cut off from His glorious life.

Ephesians 4:18

You know I don't think we can understand human beings as they are now without first coming to grips with the fall, the traumatic alteration of mankind. Understanding this alteration will move us into compassion for the one who is without Christ, as well as a profound gratitude for our own salvation. As C.S. Lewis says of this account, "an emergence of a new species, never made by God sinned its way into existence."

Mankind was born indeed, but born in *need* of **Life**. This is the condition of those without Christ. As this truth sinks into our heart, we cannot help but feel at the deepest level of our person the pain and tragedy of the fall of mankind and the desperateness for those who are without Christ, even those who are not yet aware of their need.

I think it does well for us to stay there for a while and ponder what it would be like if we ourselves were without Christ. The Holy Spirit, Himself, may be the One who engineers such a pondering time. But the Holy Spirit will also bring us back to remember that we have new life in Christ and old things are passed away! (II Corinthians 5:17) We are no longer in Adam but we are in Christ! And we will rejoice again with grateful hearts for such a wonderful salvation.

But as time passes and we journey on in our Christian life, the Holy Spirit begins to cause our hearts to hunger and thirst for deeper knowledge, that which satisfied us in the past no longer satisfies (John 7:37-38). He Himself brings us to that point of 'felt need' as He bears us on in our Christian walk (Hebrews 6:1; I Corinthians 2:7-16).

- Our needs become more deeply felt now. At times it seems that our needs are not being met at all.
- We begin to question.
- We begin to struggle.
- Perhaps pain, which has been hidden, begins to surface in our hearts, pain from our past.
- We cry... my old resources are not meeting my life needs.
- Sometimes, I don't even feel as if I am a Christian.
- My props are no longer holding me up.
- Where do I go now? I thought life was going to be different as a Christian!

At a time when this was deeply going on in my life and as I shared my struggles with the Lord, the Holy Spirit lead me on to find yet another 'eternal truth' in His word, a revelation of JESUS that has radically changed my life - that Jesus is the Firstborn from the Dead (Revelation 1:5).

The Spirit led me to see what it means for me **personally** that Jesus is the FIRSTBORN from the Dead (Revelation 1:5; Colossians 1:18). And as I have come to know Jesus for myself this way, I have also come to realize that I have been absolutely taken out of the consequences of the Fall. Of course, not to be **fully** realized until I see Him face to face, but nevertheless a settled issue **now**. And as I walk in the reality of this eternal truth, I progressively witness its transforming affect in and through my life.

In my spiritual understanding of Jesus being the Firstborn from the Dead, I have come to know that **He** is not only the **Origin** of my life but He Himself is my **Resource**.

Jesus' revelation of Himself to us is always our highest Source of strength (Colossians 1:9-11).

The Holy Spirit's disclosure of 'this truth' brought a paradigm shift in my thinking and settled the issue for me as to where to find Life and I want to share it with you (Romans 12:1-2).

Turn to Revelation 1:4-5:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the **Firstborn** from the dead...

I pondered and reflected on the truth contained in this title for the longest time. The **Firstborn** from the dead...

As I studied and meditated upon this truth about Jesus, I discovered for myself a truth that was hidden from me at first. I gleaned from the Spirit this deeper understanding of Jesus being the Firstborn while reading a book by Andrew Jukes entitled, The Names of God.

I learned that the early church saw clearly the distinction between the two apparently contradictory titles "Only Begotten" and "Firstborn." The title "Only Begotten" marks His relationship to the Father as **unique**... we are familiar with this title..."only begotten" aren't we?

In John 3:16 we come to know that "God so loved the world that He gave His **only begotten** Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." But within this familiar passage lies the truth that the "Only Begotten" of the Father became Man, in His Incarnation, in order to become the Firstborn from the dead... the Firstborn among many brethren.

Firstborn... The title itself "Firstborn"... is the "male that first openeth the womb" (Exodus 13:12). That is "the **First** delivered out of the fall or separation..." We find this truth beautifully communicated to us in Hebrews 2:9-11, the author says,

⁹...we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons to glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are **all of one**, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them **brethren**,

Wuest says about this passage of truth, "In order to bring many sons to glory our Lord becomes to them a Brother. As we have just read, "He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one..." The words "of one" are literally "out of one." That is, the Lord Jesus and the

saints are all of **one source**. Because the Lord Jesus and the saints are all out of **one source**... the writer says that Jesus is not ashamed to call the saints His **brethren**.

In order to bring many sons to glory, our Lord becomes a Brother. The Greek word for 'brother' (*adelphos*) means "from the same womb"! That **one source** is God the Father! It will ever remain true that the Son in His Deity proceeds by **eternal generation** from God the Father.

But in His Humanity, He finds His source in God. And being in Him, we find the source of our sonship in God the Father as well. Notwithstanding His superior and exalted dignity, He is not ashamed to call us brethren. What a glorious Lord we have!

Jesus is the Firstborn from the Dead, the Firstborn, the Male that first openeth the womb, the First delivered out of the fall or separation..." As I Corinthians 15:45-47 opens up to us, Jesus is the Second and Last Adam. He is the heavenly Man, He is Himself the **Origin** of a new humanity. Derk shares with us,

"Jesus is more than man, or the son of Man. He is representative Man, perfect Man, the superior Man, the Firstborn, the Head and Pattern of a new race. He is Himself the **Origin** of a new Humanity. The Man Jesus Christ never can return to what He was in His pre-incarnate glory, yet crowned with a greater glory, the redeeming of two worlds."

Jesus is the Firstborn from the Dead, "The First who was born to eternal life after the death which ends this life." He is the first Human Being that after passing through death was raised to eternal glory (Colossians 1:15, 18; Psalm 9:27 Gabelien and Adam Clarke)."

He is the Firstborn from the Dead, He is the First to be raised to eternal glory - He is the Firstborn of many Brethren (Revelations 1:5; Romans 8:29). When I heard Him personally call me 'brethren' my identity, in Christ, was a settled issue (II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 10:17; John 8:32).

Are you receiving a glance of this truth this evening, that the Only Begotten of The Father became Man in order to become the Firstborn among many brethren to bring many sons unto glory (Hebrews 2:10)?

And This One, Who inhabits eternity says to us in Revelation 1:18, "Do not be afraid, I AM He who lives and was dead and **behold** I AM alive forever more." Not merely 'I live,' but I have life, and AM the Source of Life to My people" (Jamieson, Faucett, Brown).

Following this illumination of Himself to me, He became my life source and the issue of where my life is to be found was settled!

Throughout these years I've learned that *our* responsibility is to walk in the light that He gives us personally and as we do so we will progressively experience the reality of the eternal truth and will be transformed in His image from glory to glory and this comes by the Spirit Himself (II Corinthians 3:18).

In closing, let me share a quote from last week's teaching from Watchman Nee that will help capsulize this process as we reflect on truth in the Word of God:

Without **revelation** by the Spirit we cannot commence the journey, but without the **discipline** of the Spirit we cannot complete it. Both these aspects of the Spirit's work are equally essential, but for both we can assuredly count upon Him.

Jesus says to us this evening,

I AM the Alpha and the Omega... the Beginning and the End...

I AM He who is and was and is to come...the Almighty...

I AM He who lives... and was dead... and Behold...

I AM alive forevermore...

I AM the Firstborn from the dead...

I Am the Resurrection and the Life...

I AM the Source of Life to My people,

And, I AM not ashamed to call you brethren...

For Further Reflection:

UNION WITH CHRIST

from The Christ Life by A. B. Simpson

THE NAMES OF CHRIST

by Frances H. Derk

Union With Christ

From The Christ Life by A.B. Simpson

"For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:11).

This whole passage is a beautiful picture of our identification with Christ. We are

One with Him in Nature.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2:14a), "For verily, he took not upon him the nature of angels, but he took upon him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16). How precious this word "likewise!" He has the very same humanity with man and by actual sympathy understands every instinct, feeling, hope, and fear. Not only has He a human body, but a reasonable soul and all the attributes of mind, and all the sensibilities of heart which we possess, and not only so, He still retains this perfect humanity. He has carried it to the right hand of God.

Partaker of the human name,

He knows the frailty of our frame.

Let not the transcendent glory of His Deity obscure this glorious important truth. He who is the Son of God is equally the Son of Man. But next, He is also

One in Sonship,

"for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." "Behold I and the children whom God hath given me." Not only does He come down into humanity, but He also takes the saints up into His Divinity; for they are, indeed, through Him, "partakers of the Divine nature." His own very being is imparted to the believer and he shares His actual relation to the Father. "Go tell my brethren," He says to Mary, "that I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and to your God." It is not that we are adopted into sonship, as a poor

child of obscure birth may be received into a noble family, to become the legalized son and heir, but it is as if that child could be reborn into the very blood of that highborn house. We have been actually made partakers of the same nature as God. Hence the Apostle John has finely expressed the deep reality of our sonship in his wonderful words, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God"; and then he adds, "and we are the sons of God," not merely called and even legally declared the sons of God, but actually the sons of God by receiving the life and nature of God, and therefore the brethren of our Lord; not only in His human nature, but still more in His Divine relationship. "Therefore He is not ashamed to call us brethren." He gives us that which entitles us to that right and makes us worthy of it. He does not introduce us into a position for which we are uneducated and unfitted, but He gives us a nature worthy of our glorious standing; and as He shall look upon us in our complete and glorious exaltation, reflecting His own likeness and shining in His Father's glory, He shall have no cause to be ashamed of us.

Even now He is pleased to acknowledge us before the universe and call us brethren in the sight of all earth and heaven. Oh, how this dignifies the humblest saint of God! How little we need mind the misunderstandings of the world if He "is not ashamed to call us brethren!" It is said that an English officer was once being treated with neglect and scorn by his fellow officers on account of his promotion from an obscure position to higher rank. They were not willing to forget his humble birth, and passed him by with neglect and coldness. His commanding officer heard of it and so one day he stepped into his tent and talked to him for some time, and then taking him by the arm, the two of them walked for half an hour in front of the other officers' tents. The officers saluted their commanding officer as he passed them, in profound respect, in which his companion shared. He then left the ground, while they looked after him in amazement and humiliation, and after that

day there was no lack of respect for the new officer. His commander was not ashamed to own him.

Thus our blessed Brother claims kinship with the believer before earth and heaven; thus He presents his prayers before the throne and owns his name before His Father's face, and makes the name of a mortal to be honored in the highest court in this universe.

One in Spiritual Experience

But again, He is one with us in spiritual experience. The same grace which we receive He also had to receive; the same faith which we have to exercise, He exercised. In this passage, He speaks of putting His trust in God, just as we trust, and praising Him for deliverance in the midst of the church just as we do when we receive our blessings. The Great Forerunner has already passed over the pathway of the Christian life, so wherever the sheep follow He has gone before.

This wonderful truth is sometimes difficult to realize. Christ is depicted as dropping down from heaven with a life all foreign and sublime, that we do not quite take in without much thought, the full meaning of His teachings, that He, like us, was led through all the discipline of a life of faith and dependence; that He could truly say, "I, my own self can do nothing. As I hear, I speak. I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me." "The Son can do nothing of Himself," "As the Father sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." He was dependent on the resources of prayer, communion with God, the constant supply of the Holy Spirit, and He understands all the struggles of spiritual life by actual affinity.

Hence we find Him in the prophetic picture exclaiming, "He is near that justifieth me; who is he that shall contend with me? Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." This was the language of faith, a faith that overcame in the hour of trial, just as we overcome. Not only had He the same experience as we,

but He brings us into His very experience. This is really the nature of true sanctification, that it imparts to us the sanctity of Christ. This is the meaning of the passage: "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all one." He gives His own sanctity and makes His people one with Him in His spirit of holiness. It was this that He meant when He said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be truly sanctified." He consecrated Himself to live in His people and reproduce His own pure and perfect life in their experience. Holiness is thus the indwelling of the Holy Christ, the unity of a human spirit with the spirit of Jesus.

But again, He is

One with Us in Trial.

"For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering"; "therefore He was in all points tempted like as we are, vet without sin." Therefore He has passed through every variety of human suffering, and is now able, from actual experience, to sympathize with and succor those who are tempted, and to make them realize that they are never alone in their afflictions, but understood by His kindred heart and sustained by His sympathy and love. Not only so, but He still retains this power of sympathy and feels the throb of our every pain, for He is able to be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The word "touched" expresses a great deal. It means that our troubles are His troubles, and that in all our afflictions He is afflicted. It is not a sympathy of sentiment but a sympathy of suffering.

There is much help in this for the tired heart. It is the foundation of His Priesthood, and God meant that it should be to us a source of unceasing consolation. Let us realize, more fully, our oneness with our Great High Priest, and cast all our burdens on His great heart of suffering love. If we know what it is to ache in every nerve with the responsive pain of our suffering child, we can form

some idea how our sorrows touch His heart, and thrill His exalted frame. As the mother feels her baby's pain, as the heart of friendship echoes every cry from another's woe, so in heaven, our exalted Savior, even amid the raptures of that happy world, suffers with all His children bear. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest...Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:14a, 16a). Let us bear with patience the yoke as He carries the heavier end. But He is also

One with the Believer in Death.

Not only does He suffer all the trials of His lot but He is not exempt from mortal fate; for we read that God appointed that He through the grace of God should taste death for every man, ". . .that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15). Even the dark gates of this last prison house He too has entered. There is something very suggestive in the expression that "He should taste death for every man." It seems to suggest that He had all the bitterness of the cup to drain and has taken the taste out of death for all who are united with Him. There is no poison in the cup now and no virulence in the sting. He tasted it; but the bitterness of death is past if we are in Him. "For if a man keep my sayings he shall never see death." He shall only see the face of our blessed Lord and the open gates of heaven. All the death that was in the cup. Christ has drunk, and there is the glad shout, "Thank's be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:57).

Death and the curse were in the cup;
Oh, Christ, 'twas full for Thee!
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me.
For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee;
Thou'rt risen, my bands are all untied,
And now Thou livest in Me.

Finally, He is

One with Us in Glorious Destiny.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews quotes from the eighth Psalm, which describes the future dignity and destiny of man. The psalmist speaks of the glorious dignity of man in these words, "... .thou hast put all things [in subjection] under his feet" (Ps. 8:6b), and the apostle argues if this be literally true, it implies a dignity that leaves nothing that is not put under man, but he says as a matter of actual observation, "But now we see not vet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8b). How then can the words be true of man? The glorious explanation is that they are true of the Son of Man, the Great Head of the race. "We see not yet all things put under man. But we see Jesus...crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:8b, 9a). He takes up the honor of the race and wins the crown of dominion for humanity, and then He shares it all with us. For all that He has won He has won as a man, for redeemed humanity; and has raised us up with Him to sit in heavenly places, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us by Christ Jesus. Every crown He wears He shall share with us. "He that overcometh shall sit on His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father on His throne." This is the high and glorious hope of every child of God. This is the meaning of our union with the Son of God. Well may the apostle say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: [as the sons of God] but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). Such a hope may well inspire and unspeakably encourage the children of God.

Let us think of some of its practical applications: first, let us learn the secret even of our faith. It is the faith of Christ, springing in our heart and trusting in our trials. So shall we also sing. "The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Thus looking off, unto Jesus, "The Author and Finisher of our faith," we shall find that instead of

struggling to reach the promises of God, we shall lie down upon them in blessed repose and be borne up by them with the faith which is no more our own than the promises upon which it rests. Each new need will find us leaning afresh on Him for the grace to trust and to overcome.

The true spirit of prayer is the spirit of Christ in us. "In the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee." Christ still sings these praises in the trusting heart and lifts his prayers into songs of victory. Paul and Silas knew the true spirit of prayer in the prison of Philippi and turned prayer into praise, night into day, the sorrow into joy. When He indwells as the spirit of faith, He will also become the spirit of praise.

But again, this should comfort us in trial; our Brother is bearing all that we bear, and if He can stand it, surely we can. His Father would not allow His own beloved Son to have a needless pain, and therefore we may be sure that there is a "need be" for all we are called to bear. If Christ is carrying the other end of the yoke, we may know it is right and that we shall not sink under the load. Let us then rejoice that we are partakers of the sufferings of Christ that "when His glory shall be revealed we shall be glad also with exceeding joy."

Let this comfort us amid imperfect experiences and realizations of victory. "We see not yet all things put under Him." How true this is to us all! How many things there are that seem to be stronger than we are; but blessed be His name! they are all in subjection under Him, and we see Jesus crowned above them all, and Jesus is our Head, our representative, our other self, and where He is, we shall surely be. Therefore when we fail to see anything that God has promised, and that we have claimed in our experience, let us look up and see it realized in Him, and claim it in Him for ourselves. Our side is only half the circle, the heaven side is already complete, and the rainbow of which we see not the upper half, shall one day be all around the throne and take in the other hemisphere of our now unfinished life. By faith, then, let us enter into all our inheritance. Let us lift up our eyes to the north and to the south, to the

east and to the west, and hear Him say, "All the land that thou seest will I give them." Let us remember that the circle is complete, that the inheritance is unlimited, and that all things are put under His feet. Have we counted this true without abatement, or have we discounted it and lost its fullness? Shall we not henceforth "Crown Him Lord of all," and put all things under His feet, and then, keeping step with Him, put our feet on the difficulties and adversaries that we have feared so long, and go out henceforth in the chariot of His Ascension, to sing as we ascend, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place" (II Cor. 2:14).

The Names of Christ By Francis H. Derk

JEHOVAH-JESUS

Jehovah-Saviour (Matt. 1:18-25). Prophesied (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:31; 2:21). "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Ps. 98:2; Isa. 42:6-7; 52:10; Luke 2:30-32; 3:6; 19:9; Rom. 10:12, 18).

In the name Jehovah, God is revealed in all the majesty, mystery, and magnitude of His redeeming self. Man, the crowning act of His creation, is alone able to understand and comprehend the Infinite and Eternal. According to His promises God reveals Himself in His redemptive names. Gradually unfolding in the passing years, they culminate in "Jehovah-Jesus." Thus the ultimate name is the name of Redemption.

Salvation is the great all-inclusive word in the Bible, and all that the names of Jehovah implied and revealed is seen here. The "ever becoming" "became," and is now the "same yesterday, today and forever." Some day Israel will see who Jehovah-Jesus really is and accept Him. See Isa. 12:1–6; 43:3; 45:21; Zech. 13:6; 14:16–21; Rom. 9:27; 11:12, 15, 25.

ETERNAL LIFE

Zoe is life that belongs to eternity and centered in Jesus Christ. It is more than endless existence, mere physical consciousness or any other created life. It is the impartation of the very life of Christ (II Pet. 1:3-4) which even physical death cannot touch or interrupt (I Thess. 5:10). Its final fruition and perfection will be realized in heaven (Rom. 2:7; II Cor. 5:4). Knowing Jesus Christ is in itself eternal life. To know Him is to experience Him (John 20:31). Zoe is mentioned 34 times in the Gospel of John and 11 times in First John and always in reference to Christ. His Gospel is more than a "life of Christ"; it is the Gospel of "life in Christ." In Him was Zoe—true, divine, eternal (John 3:15-16; 6:27-47; Matt. 7:14; 9:16). He said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Protos. "First and the Last" (Rev. 1:11, 17; 2:8; 22:13).

Proteuo. In all things the "preeminence," i.e., "first" (Col. 1:18). See Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12. The Eternal, the source and sustainer, and to whom all returns (Eph. 1:10).

Protokos. "First begotten" (Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:6;

5:5). "First begotten of the dead" (Rev. 1:5).

"Firstborn" (Ps. 89:27; Zech. 12:10). "Firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18). "Firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15).

"Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

Aparche. "Firstfruits" (I Cor. 15:23). Consult "firstfruits" in the Old Testament where an offering was made on behalf of the individual, or nation, as rightfully belonging to God. This was a token of their gratitude for His goodness (Ex. 23:19; Lev. 23:10-17; Deut. 26:1-11).

ONLY BEGOTTEN

"Only Begotten" Monogenes. It is not accepted as the best translation as Mono means 'only,' and Genes translated 'Begotten' is not from "Gennao" to beget, but from Genes meaning 'kind.' Unique, in that it is the only one of its kind, and expressive of His relationship with the Father. There can be none other but He. Not simply a Son of God among other children of God, but a Son above all others in a particular and peculiar sense that cannot be misunderstood. He never said "Our Father" but "My Father." The testimony of Jesus concerning Himself, coupled with the evidence of John, amply bears this out. "Only Begotten" is also used to distinguish between the Father and the Son, thus affirming the Trinity. "God has many children, but only one 'Only Begotten Son,' through whom all things and all other children were made."—Martin Luther

First Begotten, i.e., First Born (Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5-6; 5:5). In Ps. 2:7 "begotten" is *Yalad* which means 'to bear' as in Isa. 7:14; 9:6.

BEGOTTEN

"Chief, only Born" (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; I John 4:9). The term is used of human sons as in Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Heb. 11:17. John alone uses the term "Only Begotten" of Christ in a manner for which there is no earthly counterpart. It is unique in that there is a glory attached as the context clearly reveals. John could have received the term from Christ Himself as in John 3:16. Lampe and Hengstenburg are quoted as saying that it is derived from Zech. 12:10, where the Messiah is compared to an "Only Begotten." "And they have looked unto me whom they have pierced, and they have mourned over the Only One."—Vulgate. Also, "And they have been in bitterness for it, like the bitterness over the First Born."—Lange

Attention is called to the fact that ancient authorities are almost equally divided between "the Only Begotten God" and "the Only Begotten Son." For a fuller explanation consult Lange's Commentary on this chapter; Textual and Grammatical Criticism. The Nicene explanation is "Eternally Begotten of the Essence of the Father."

Jesus emphatically asserted His deity and calls Himself not only a Son of God but *the* Son of God above all others in a unique sense not to be denied. He is *the* Son from eternity and a Son by nature, who alone knows and reveals the Father, saying not "Our Father" but "My Father."

"First Born," Prototokos (Col. 1:15; Rev. 1:5, 6).

Notes

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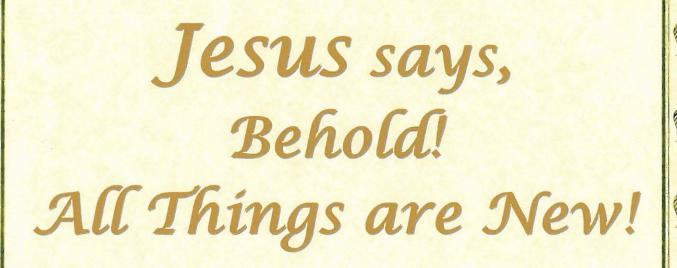
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Word Studies in the Greek New Testament by Kenneth S. Wuest



Christ's death and resurrection for us, and our identification with Him by faith, make existence as a new creation possible.

Week 3 of 6

Well of Life Ministries

Altha Burts

How many have come this evening fully expecting the Holy Spirit to move in power through the Word of God? Wonderful! So have I.

Did you know that the Holy Spirit reveals to us the deep things of God that are hidden from and are foolishness to the natural man? It's true. Paul says in I Corinthians 2:9,

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit."

Do we hear what is being communicated in this verse? Are we responding receptively in spirit? Let's look again and position ourselves to receive.

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

> nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God **has prepared** for those who love Him.

But God

has revealed them to us through His Spirit."

The Spirit reveals to the individual believer the deep things of God, the one who holds Him in affectionate reverence, promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed (I Corinthians 2:9; Amplified Bible).

We must come to *realize* once and for all that it is not enough that we have the revelation of God before us to study in the **written Word**, but we must also have the **inward illumination** of the Holy Spirit to enable us to apprehend The Word as we study. I'm asking the Holy Spirit to give us just such an illumination of His Word this evening, as we look more deeply into an aspect of "The Gospel Message."

In most New Testament usages, 'the gospel' is defined as "the sum total of the saving truth about Jesus as it is communicated to lost humanity." But this evening we want more than its mere definition, we want the substance... we want Jesus Himself!

In order for us to be brought into a fuller revelation of Jesus, I'd like to begin with a quote from Andrew Jukes which spurred me on in my own prayerful pursuit of the meaning of the Gospel message as we see it in the book of John. He begins with a probing question,

"What is the Gospel? What are the tidings of great joy to be proclaimed as the *substance* or *result* of Christ's coming?

Several answers might be given, differing somewhat in form, yet true. Some perhaps, would say, this is the Gospel; Christ came into the world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15). Others, that 'through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses' (Acts 13:38-39 RSV).

Others again would give the fuller statement in our Lord's own words, namely, that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (or may have eternal life in Him).

Jukes continues,

"These words surely are the gospel and implicitly contain all the Good News. But is this the Gospel as men generally understand it, at least, the Gospel according to the four evangelists?

What is the *substance* of what we rightly call the four Gospels? Is it not, that **by** the coming of the Eternal Word (the Only Begotten of the Father) a New Man has been brought forth out of our divided nature who truly is Son of God and Son of Man, the witness that the breach which sin has made has been healed (Isaiah 53:4; I Peter 2:24)? Is not this the fact revealed in Christ?"

But did the Only Begotten of the Father become Man that He should dwell alone as Son of God?

During our time together last week, we came to see that Jesus is the Firstborn from the dead; that is the "male that First openeth the womb" (Exodus 13:12). The First delivered out of the fall or separation. The First who was born to eternal life after the death which ended this life (Colossians 1:15, 18). The Firstborn, the First Human Being that after **having** passed through death, was raised to eternal glory.

We also came to see "that the Only Begotten of the Father, who became Man, can never return to what He was in His pre-incarnate glory, but now crowned with a greater glory the redeeming glory of two worlds" (Derk). Jesus is the heavenly Man (I Corinthians 15:45). And in Him the complete concept of humanity is *realized* (Derk).

But again did the Only Begotten of the Father become Man that He should dwell alone as Son of God? No! Not to dwell alone!

"Christ's rank as the Firstborn shows that He stands as the living exalted Head of the *new humanity*, as the Last Adam **now crowned** with glory and honor" (Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:22 Clarke, Wycliff).

Now crowned with glory and honor, forever He will always be Jesus, never to return to what He was before, forever in the Godhead He is the God-Man, Christ Jesus, bearing the marks of His humanity. He can never return to what He was in His pre-incarnate glory, yet crowned with a greater glory, the redeeming glory of two worlds.

And Wiersbe tells us that, "we (as new creations) are so closely identified with Christ as members of His body, that *our* position in this world is like His exalted position in heaven; "as He is so we are in this world" (I John 4:17).

Again, we are so closely identified with Christ as members of His body that our position in this world is like His exalted position in heaven!

This is the Good News that makes the angels glad, even if we yet dimly comprehend it. Oh, the glory of Jesus, our exalted Head!

We can come to understand more comprehensively this message of the Gospel as we journey through the book of John. Listen as the Holy Spirit once again reveals Jesus to us,

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

We learn through Wycliff that,

"Without delay the writer presents the central figure of the Gospel, but does not call Him Jesus or Christ. At this point He is the Logos (The Word). This term has Old Testament roots suggesting there the concepts of wisdom, power, and a special relation to God.

It was widely used, too, by philosophers to express such ideas as reason and mediation between God and the world. In John's day, all classes of readers would have understood its suitability here where revelation is the keynote. But the unique feature is that the Logos (the Word) is also the Son of the Father, who became incarnate in order to reveal God fully (John 1:14, 18)."

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

As we continue on in John, we come to John 1:14 where we read,

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father."

In The Bible Knowledge Commentary we find,

"Christ the eternal Logos, who is God, came to earth as Man. Yet in doing so, He did not merely "appear" like a man; He became one. Humanity, in other words, was added to Christ's deity" (Philippians 2:5-9).

Jesus, the eternal Word became flesh. Vines says, "He was possessed of real and permanent manhood. He "became," not "was made." He took upon Himself the real and complete nature of man. This union of Godhead with manhood remains indissolvable."

As we continue our journey through the Gospel of John, the Holy Spirit seems to cause our eyes to stop at the passage which says, "Behold!" "Behold, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). As we meditate upon this passage the Holy Spirit begins to open our eyes and impart yet another **view** of the Lord's glory.

We see Jesus here as the Lamb of God! If we quiet our hearts and stay here for a while, the Spirit may bring to our remembrance certain verses we have read in the Old Testament which prefigured Christ as The Passover Lamb (cf I Corinthians 5:7). In the 12th chapter in the book of Exodus we read:

- The lamb must be unblemished (Ex 12:5-6).
- The lamb must be slain (Ex 12:6).
- The blood must be applied (Ex 12:7).

The blood was to be sprinkled "on the two door posts and the lintel of the houses where it might be **looked to**, not on the threshold to be trodden underfoot (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown).

- The lamb was a sacrifice (Ex 12:27).
- The sacrifice was effective and accepted (Ex 12:23).
- It was the Lord's Passover (Ex 12:11, 27).

"And it shall be, when your children say to you, what do you *mean* by this service (this rememberance)? That you shall say: 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord.'" It was the Lord's Passover. It was the Passover sacrifice of the Lord appointed and kept by Him.

Jesus is the Lamb of God!

And the Holy Spirit might begin to open up the eyes of our heart and we *realize*, perhaps for the first time, it is the Lord's Passover it was the Passover sacrifice of the Lord! Let's look at what Arthur Pink says about this truth,

"This emphasizes a side of the truth which is much neglected today in evangelical preaching. We have much to say about what Christ's death accomplished for those who believe in Him, but very little is said about what the death accomplished Godwards. The more we study the teaching of scripture on this subject, and the more we lay hold by simple faith of what the Cross (the blood) means to God, the more stable will be our peace and the deeper our joy and praise."

As we come to 'realize' that Christ is now 'our' Passover, as believers, because He was **First** the Lord's Passover, our faith begins to soar!

Why? Because it takes us out of the equation!

As we come to see more clearly the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, we begin to rest in **His finished work**. We come to 'realize' once and for all that "salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10) God offers Christ's blood to us as our Substitutionary Sacrifice and accepts it when we, in faith, offer it back to Him" (I Peter 1:18-19, Romans 3:25; Genesis 4:4). Oh, the power of the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God!

As we move on in the book of John, the Holy Spirit gives us yet another view of Jesus; this time as **The Grain of Wheat**. John 12:24 says,

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."

Matthew Henry helps us to see,

"He fell to the ground (descended from heaven) in His incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in this earth, so much was His glory veiled; but this was not all: He died. This **immortal seed** submitted to the laws of mortality, He lay in the grave like seed under the clods; but as the seed comes up again green, and fresh, and flourishing, and with a great **increase**, so one dying Christ gathered to Himself thousands of living Christians, and He became their root bringing many sons to glory."

The glory of Jesus! The Grain of Wheat!

As the Holy Spirit moves us on in the book of John, next we see Him with Mary Magdaline after His resurrection in John 20:17:

"Jesus said to her, 'do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My **brethren** and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father and to My God and your God."

As we learn from Pink, "When Jesus said to Mary, 'Go to My brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and to your Father and to My God and to your God, Jesus, for the first time was addressing the disciples as brethren ('of the same womb'). It is on **Resurrection ground** that we are thus related to Christ." Believers in Jesus become a part of Jesus' family with God as their Father for this reason; He is not ashamed to call *us* brethren (cf Hebrews 2:11-12; Romans 8:15-17, 29; Galatians 3:26). And from Simpson we add,

"We are one in sonship. It is not that we are adopted into sonship, as a poor child of obscure birth may be received into a noble family, to become the legalized son and heir, but it is as if that child could be *reborn* into the very blood of that highborn house. He does not introduce us into a position for which we are uneducated and unfitted, but He gives us a **nature worthy** of our glorious standing as partakers of His glorified Life" (from "The Christ Life").

And finally in our closing passage this evening, we come to John 20:19-22 where we see Jesus with His disciples after His resurrection,

"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when

they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' "And when He had said this, He **breathed** on them, and said to them. 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

Jesus "breathed" on them. The Greek word used here is employed nowhere else in the New Testament, but is the very one used by the Septuagint translators of Genesis 2:7; "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Jesus "breathed" on them.

The **old** creation began with the breath of God; now the **new** creation begins with the breath of God the Son.

Christ's death and resurrection for us, and our identification with Him by faith, make **existence** as a new creation possible.

Old things have passed away and behold all things are new!

Is this not the substance or result of Christ's coming?

Is this not the Good News... which makes the angels glad?

Even if we, as Christians, only dimly apprehend it

For Further Reflection:

THE NAMES OF CHRIST by Frances H. Derk

The Names of Christ By Francis H. Derk

JESUS

Matt. 1:21, 25; Luke 1:31; Heb. 1:4; James 2:7. Jesus was His human name as given by the angel. It is used mainly of the historical Jesus with reference to His earthly life. Becoming His favorite name it is recorded over 700 times in the Gospels and 101 times in the rest of the New Testament. The title "Christ" added to Jesus has deep religious significance. The historical Jesus merges into the mystical Christ. Deity and humanity become locked together in a favorite title, Jesus Christ. The name Jesus Christ is used only 5 times in the Gospels and in the rest of the New Testament 192 times. However, He will always be Jesus, never to return to what He was heretofor. Forever in the Godhead He is the God-Man, Christ Jesus, bearing the marks of His humanity.

MAN

In the New Testament Christ is seen as a man (John 4:29; 8:40; 19:5; Rom. 5:15; I Tim. 2:5). See John 1:14; 3:13; Acts 2:22 and many others. As the "Seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15); "Fruit of the earth" (Isa. 4:2); "out of Judah" (Micah 5:2); "Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). See Matt. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6; 32:1-2.

He is the "second Adam" (I Cor. 15:47), archtype of humanity, origin of a new humanity, founder and head. The "heavenly Man" (I Cor. 15:45); "last Man" (I Cor. 15:45); "of thy right hand" (Ps. 80:15-17); "Man of Sorrows" (Isa. 53:3; Matt. 26:38).

He is the ideal, the perfect, the representative Man—all that Adam failed to be. In Him the complete concept of humanity is realized. His names, titles, symbols and types all express His humanity. As God manifest in the flesh Christ is forever linked to humanity, never to return to what He once was. Forever the God-Man He bears the scars of His kinship to us.

LAMB

"Lamb" is used almost exclusively by John, with the exception of Acts 8:32 and I Pet. 1:19. The word is found 28 times in the book of Revelation, in a very significant manner. See Isa. 53:6–12; Ex. 12; Deut. 16:2–6; Matt. 26:28; John 1:29; I Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:14, 22, 29; I Pet. 1:18, 19; 2:23; I John 1:7.

PASSOVER

"Christ our Passover" (I Cor. 5:7). Prefigured in the Old Testament (Ex. 12:3-11). See Isa. 53:7; John 1:29; 15:13; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6-12. Christ observed the Passover and revealed its true meaning (Matt. 26:19; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7-22; John 6:57; 13:1-35; I Cor. 11).

In the Old Testament the lamb must be unblemished (Ex. 12:5-6; Luke 11:53-54; John 8:46; 18:38; Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 1:19). The lamb must be slain (Ex. 12:6; John 12:24; Heb. 9:22). The blood must be applied (Ex. 12:7, 13; John 1:7; 3:36; Heb. 10:10, 14). The lamb was a sacrifice (Ex. 12:27; I Cor. 5:7). No bones were to be broken (Ex. 12:46; John 19:36; Num. 9:12; Ps. 34:20). The sacrifice was effective and accepted (Ex. 12:13, 23; Heb. 9:26).

SACRIFICE

The first mention of sacrifice in the Bible is in Gen. 4:4 and quoted in Heb. 11:4. There is no other way to approach God for salvation. It is difficult to propound a perfect theory to cover the accomplished fact. "Now we know in part" is also true of theology. Every doctrine awaits the final answer that for the present faith may accept. I may not know all about the disease of sin but I know the great Physician.

Sacrifice meant the suffering and death of the victim, a substitute to meet the just demands of a holy God. Thus God can forgive and restore the sinner to fellowship. His death on the cross is described as sacrificial. Not the death of a misguided zealot, mistaken martyrdom, or a miscarriage of justice; but the vicarious death of God's Son for the world. It is efficacious to all who come to Him. He died for all, He died for me, He died in our place (Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32; John 1:29; Ex. 12:27; I Cor. 5:7). See also Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:26; 10:12; I Pet. 1:19.

Isa. 53:10; II Cor. 5:21. Here sin means sin offering or sacrifice for sin. The Hebrew word for sin also means sin offering and so the Septuagint translates (Matt. 8:17; Heb. 9:28; I Pet. 2:24; 3:18). He became, not sin, but a sin offering. He had no sin, committed no sin, nor confessed sin. He came in the "likeness" of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 7:26; Ps. 45:2; Isa. 53:12; Dan. 9:26; Zech. 13:7; Luke 1:35; John 8:46; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 5:2; I John 2:1; 3:5).

According to Isa. 53 He was the Sin Bearer. "He hath borne our griefs" (vs. 4); "carried our sorrows" (vs. 4; Matt. 8:17); "upon him" (vs. 5); "laid on him" (vs. 6: I Pet. 2:24); "stricken" (vs. 8); "bear iniquity" (vs. 11); "bare sins" (vs. 12; Heb. 9:28). Consult John 10:11, 15–18; 13:37–38; Gal. 2:20; I Tim. 2:6; I Pet. 3:18; I John 3:16.

OFFERING

Isa. 53:10; Heb. 9:14, 28 and others. An expiatory, sacrificial offering for sin (Rom. 3:23; 8:3). While the image of Christ can be seen in the Old Testament offerings, the classic reference is Isa. 53. All the New Testament writers relate the death of Christ to this truth alone (Eph. 5:2). His offering is pictured as ransom, propitiation, reconciliation, substitution, etc. (John 10:11, 15–18; I John 3:16). "Bore our griefs" means to 'bear away' (Isa. 53:4, 12; John 1:29; Acts 8:30–35; 13:27; I Pet. 1:19–20). "Carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4; Matt. 8:17; I Pet. 2:24). "Laid on him," i.e., 'caused to meet on him' (Isa. 53:6; II Cor. 5:21). See Lev. 3:2, 8, 13; 4:15, 24, 33; 8:14, 18, 22.

RANSOM

"He gave himself a ransom" (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; Rom. 8:2; I Tim. 2:6). "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25). "Gaal," to ransom or redeem. "I have found a ransom" (Job. 33:24), i.e., Kaphar, covering or atonement. Isa. 53:6, 10, 11 speaks of a ransom. Isa. 59:20; Hosea 13:14, "Gaal" or "Redeemer." See Acts 20:28; I Cor. 6:20; 7:23;

I Pet. 1:18-19; II Pet. 2:1. For the idea of ransom see Ex. 30:12; Num. 35:31; Prov. 13:8.

The price of redemption or substitution Ex. 21:30; 22: 10-12; Lev. 19:20). Many words in the Bible set forth this truth. No one word fully covers the idea of atonement or ransom, but coupled with others we get a clearer picture. All point to the sacrificial and vicarious death of Christ.

PROPITIATION

I John 2:2; 4:10; Heb. 2:17; 9:5; Rom. 3:25. That which propitiates, a propitiatory. The atoning death of Jesus Christ and the reconciliation it effects. *Hilasterion*, used in the Septuagint and in Heb. 9:5, is translated "Mercy-Seat." In Luke 18:13 "merciful" is *Hilaskomai*, 'God be propitious to me.' As a Jew he would be thinking of the Mercy-Seat (Ex. 25: 17-21). Thus "propitiate" is a New Testament word that reaches back into the Old Testament for its fullest meaning. However, no single word can completely explain the meaning

of His atoning death.

The great enigma of the Atonement is how God can place the sins of guilty man on His innocent Son. This mystery can be grasped only by faith and divine revelation. Words used to describe this even are varied but carry the same idea. The Hebrew word is Kapporeth, "Mercy-Seat," the place of atonement (Heb. 9:5). Kaphar (to cover) in the Old Testament is atonement. Also to appease, forgive, purge, etc. The lid of the Ark of the Covenant was the Kaphar, or covering (Ex. 25:21; Lev. 16:14). On this the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14-15). It was more than a mere lid or covering. The Ark had a separate and spiritual meaning, deeply significant of other things. Here at the place of sacrifice God would meet man; sin would be forgiven and covered. Thus in Lev. 1:4 "atonement" is 'putting a cover over,' covering our unworthiness and protecting us in the presence of a holy God. Redemption is accomplished by the sprinkled blood of the sacrifice.

Thus "propitiation" means to make atonement (Ex. 30:10, 15-16; Lev. 16:1-34; 23:27; Heb. 9:1-14). To cover as with pitch (Gen. 6:14). A ransom (Ex. 30:12). Satisfaction (Num. 35:31-32). See I Cor. 1:30; 6:20; Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 9:12; Rev. 5:9.

Here is the great thought of reconciliation (Lev. 6:30; 8:15; 16:20; Ezek. 45:15–20; I Sam. 29:4; Dan. 9:24; Heb. 2:17). Reconcile is *Hilaskomai*, to propitiate. See Rom. 5:10; 11:15; II Cor. 5:18–20; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20–21. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3; I Pet. 1:18–19; Heb. 9:28).

REDEEMER

"The Angel which redeemed me" (Gen. 48:16). The great prophetic theme of the Old Testament was the coming Redeemer. Shortly after man sinned the initial promise was given (Gen. 3:15). All later prophecy springs from this, lending credence and intelligibility to that which followed, growing into a mighty river that sweeps on to eternity (Isa. 41:14; 44:6; 63:9). Consult the following scriptures: Isa. 59:20–21; Hosea 13:14; Acts 15:14–17; Rom. 11:23–29; Luke 2:38; Acts 20:28; Rom. 3:24; 4:23; I Cor. 1:30; 6:20; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; I Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:12; I Pet. 1: 18–25.

ADAM

I Cor. 15:45; Rom. 5:14. Type, pattern, resemblance, and impression. What man should have been Adam failed to realize. In Christ we have the complete concept. Bearing the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. As Son of Man He answered to the perfect idea of what a man should be and what God intended. What was lost in Adam cannot be found in any other Adam but the Last Adam. The first was a figure of Him that would come.

The two Adams are contrasted (I Cor. 15:21-22).

First Adam

Last Adam

- 1. Came Death (vs. 21) ____ Came Resurrection (vs. 21)
- 2. All Die (vs. 22; Rom. 5:17) ___ All Made Alive (vs. 22)
- 3. Living Soul (vs. 45) _____ Quickening Spirit (vs. 45)
- 4. Natural (vs. 46) _____ Spiritual (vs. 46)
- 5. Earthy (vs. 48) _____ Heavenly (vs. 48)
- 6. Judgment (Rom. 5:18) ____ Justification (Rom. 5:18)
- 7. Disobedience (Rom. 5:19) Obedience (Rom. 5:19)
- 8. Sin Reigned (Rom. 5:20-21) _____ Grace Reigned (Rom. 5:20-21)

He is the Life—physical, spiritual and eternal—and imparted all three (John 11:25; Col. 3:4; I John 1:2). Life is mentioned 133 times in the New Testament: 34 times in the Gospel of John, 11 times in I John, and 15 times in Revelation.

While the word "life" has many and varied meanings, the emphasis is definitely on spiritual and eternal life. It is more than endless existence, as this is true of the unregenerate. It is a distinct quality of life in and from Jesus Christ.

Zoe is the true, divine and immortal life (John 3:15-16; 6:27, 33, 40, 47). "In him was life" (John 1:4). This was Life of all life; pure and full; or "in him was the life." "It is said you cannot divide the idea of "Zoe" into physical, spiritual, moral or eternal life. It is creative, the ultimate principle of life which manifests itself in the operations of life in every province."—Lange

He is the Creator and Sustainer of all life (Acts 17:28).

HEAVENLY

Came from and returned to Heaven (John 3:13, 31; 8:23; 16:5). Is the Bread of Heaven (John 6:32-33); the Heavenly One (I Cor. 15:49; Rom. 8:29; I John 3:2).

SON

In relation to His humanity He is the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13; Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 21:27; 22:69; John 1:51). This title was used only by the Lord of Himself, and by Stephen in Acts 7:56 and in Rev. 1:13; 14:14. In no place is the precise meaning given. It seems to be His racial name as representative Man, transcending all men, the second and last Adam (I Cor. 15:45); and as Judge (Matt. 25:31–36). It could have been a protest against the secular idea of the Messiah of His day, as He used this more than Messiah. However, He linked it with Dan. 7:13 where Deity is clearly seen. Common folk of His day were called the "sons of man," the despised (John 7:49). He identified Himself more with humanity than He did with Israel.

The term "Son of Man" is found more than 60 times in the Book of Ezekiel, Ps. 8:4; 144:3 and points to man in all his weakness. Unlike any other designations it was not distorted to fit any false expectations of the Messiah. He thus was able to emphasize His true and genuine humanity. Jesus used it of Himself about 78 times in the Gospels.

It was also said there was a rabbinical title of the Messiah, with somewhat the same idea, called "The Son of the Fallen." He did identify Himself with fallen humanity, Friend of publicans and sinners.

Almost without exception He used this name in connection with His redemptive ministry, humiliation, suffering and future glory (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 16:28; 26:24; Luke 21:27; Rev. 1:13–14; 14:14). Associated with humanity in adopting this name, He is more than Man, or a Son of Man or Son of Adam. He is Representative Man, Ideal Man, Perfect Man, the Superior Man, the First Born, the Head and Pattern of a new race.

This, His favorite title, puts Him in His rightful place as Head of the human race, and more than a Son of Israel. In the genealogies we find Gentile names. Forever He is "The Man Christ Jesus." Never can He return to what He was in His pre-incarnate glory, yet crowned with a greater glory, the redeeming glory of two worlds.

"Son of God" was used on occasion as an honorary title for an angel, king or good moral person (Gen. 6:2; Job 1:6; 38:7; Hosea 1:10). Applied to Jesus it had a distinct and unique meaning transcending that of ordinary man, designated by Ps. 2:7, 12. See Isa. 9:6; Matt. 16:16; 26:63–65. He had the same nature and attributes as God, co-equal and co-eternal (John 5:18). It was an acceptable title with Him (Matt. 4:3; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54). He died accused of blasphemy (Mark 14:61; John 5:18; 10:30–33; Phil. 2:6). He is "Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16; John 6:69). "The Living God" was a favorite title of the Old Testament in contrast to idols, and in His manifestation of Himself to Israel. In Jesus we see the "Shekinah" of the "Living God." See Deut. 5:26; Josh. 3:10; I Sam. 17:26, 36; Ps. 42; Jer. 10:10; 17:13; 23:36; Dan. 6:20, 26; Rev. 1:8, 18; 4:10.

Perhaps His greatest and most familiar name is "Only Begotten Son." See Begotten, First. He is the "Only Born," the Chief, Only Begotten (Ps. 2:7; Zech. 12:10; John 3:16; Heb. 1:5). John alone uses this designation of Christ in five different places (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; I John 4:9). He probably learned it from Christ as in John 3:16. Paul's "First Born" or "First Begotten" is also used in a special sense of earthly children. Of Christ see Ps. 89:27; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5. Of children see Matt. 1:25; Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Heb. 11:17.

Notes

References

All scripture is from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

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We are Not of This World...
We are Born From Above!

"Positionally, we are right now, 'as He is.' We are so closely identified with Christ, as members of His body, that our position in this world is like His exalted position in heaven." As He is in His exalted position, so we are in this world (Gaebelien).

Week 4 of 6

Well of Life Ministries

Altha Burts

Not of This World... Born From Above

October 6, 2003

Have you come this evening positioned 'in spirit' to receive "those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (I Corinthians 2:9)? Wonderful! So have I!

I want to begin by quoting from David Needham, this evening, which will help us center our thoughts on the message the Lord has for us:

"Like scuba divers on the floor of the sea, the first generation Christians knew they were living in an alien environment. They knew they were 'not of this world' just as Jesus was not of this world (John 17:14-16).

Life for them had to come from above – from their true home. Though to the world, they may have appeared a bit strange – like sea creatures with flapping fins, masks, and wetsuits – they **knew** they were in an alien environment.

Because of this, they looked at life though **different eyes.** Their awareness of their new identity automatically produced in them a revolutionary change as to why they were alive as to their purpose and meaning."

In their true identity, these early Christians *knew* they were no longer suited for this world system. This concept of identity, so fundamental, was well known within the leadership of the early church. We need only to read the book of Acts to discover this:

- Their words were clear.
- Their analogies simple and striking,
- They spoke without hesitating, and
- They had a boldness which was profound and authoritative (I John 4:17).

Peter Himself tells us that they knew they were "aliens and exiles" (I Pet 2:10-11). He says,

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, who were once not a people but now the people of God. Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from the fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11).

Though Peter took this expression from the Old Testament in Leviticus 25:23, he used it here in a **distinctly** new way! Under the Old Covenant, we know that the Promised Land was owned by God, therefore the Israelites were to remember they were but tenants — "aliens and sojourners." But, in the New Covenant age, Peter understood Jesus' words, 'not of this world' to mean believer's were aliens in a new sense! Lets discover for ourselves why this was the case.

As the Holy Spirit opens this truth up to us, we will automatically have a paradigm shift in the way we view ourselves as well as our relationship to the world, the flesh, Satan and his kingdom. It will need to be worked out in our daily choices, but the paradigm shift will happen!

But first lets ask ourselves some questions. Why is it important for us as Christians to possess these truths ourselves?

- To own them?
- To have them become a part of us?
- To be interwoven into the very fabric of our being (our tapestry of faith)?

I think the answer to these questions can best be found in Acts 3:1-6, perhaps not a new passage to many of you, but there may be a new insight for you this evening.

¹"Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the nineth hour.

²And a certain man lame from his mother's womb who was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called 'Beautiful,' to ask alms from those who entered the temple.

³Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.

⁴And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."

⁵So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

⁶Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but **what I do have I give you**; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." The principle here is 'such as I have I give'!

It is in coming to *know*, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, what we have that enables us to impart it to others with confidence and authority (Romans 10:17)! When Peter says, "Look at us," he is communicating his confidence, his faith as he says to this man, "In the Name of Jesus rise up and walk."

Peter *knew* what he had, he *knew* that he had been given by the Lord the power and the authority to minister healing in the Lord's name. We as a church **first** need to *know* what we have been given in Christ in order to impart it to others. In the book of Daniel we read,

"...the people who *know* their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who *understand* shall instruct many" (Daniel 11:32-33).

The early church had a powerful knowledge of God as well as a deep understanding of who they were in Christ. I believe the first generation Christians had a 'realization' of something that we fall short of today, that is, that we are 'not of this world' even as Jesus was 'not of this world'.

Jesus wants us to *know* this truth about ourselves, because it is true! In John 17:14 He **declares** this truth about us! We hear this in His prayer to His Father,

¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, **just as** I am not of the world."

And then in verses 15-16, He goes on to say,

¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them form the evil one.

¹⁶They are not of the world, **just as** I am not of the world."

As I personally studied and reflected on this passage of scripture, the Holy Spirit seemed to stop me. I began to meditate on this truth in order to personally appropriate this truth for myself, the truth that I am 'not of this world' just as Jesus is not of this world.

As I continued to dig deeper into the meaning of this verse, the Holy Spirit seemed to illuminate the word "of" and it struck me and I began to look at other related passages. As you hear these words you might be recalling for yourself other passages, for me they came in the book of John. One of the first verses I recalled was John 8:23. This may be a familiar verse to many of you. In this passage of scripture John 8:21-23, Jesus is predicting His departure from this world and says to the Pharisees,

²¹"I am going away, and you will seek Me and will die in your sins. Where I go you cannot come.

²²So the Jews said "Will He kill Himself because He says "Where I go you cannot come?"

²³And He said to them, "You are from beneath, I am from above. You are **of** the world, I am 'not of this world'."

The word "of" stuck in my mind again, so I continued to study and I found that in this passage the word "of" denotes His origin, His nature was 'not of this world'.

As I continued my study, the Spirit brought to my attention another passage further on in John, this time in John 15:19, when the Lord is speaking of the world's hatred for the disciples,

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were **of** the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are 'not of the world,' but I chose you out **of** the world, the world hates you."

Now in John 8:23 when Jesus addresses the Pharisees, He **declared** of **Himself** that He was from above and 'not of this world' when He says to them,

"You are from beneath, I am from above; you are of the world; I am 'not of this world'."

But here in John 15:19, we see something very different and it has profound implications for us! Now, for the **first time** Jesus **declares** the *same thing* of His disciples, as being 'not of this world', just as He is 'not of this world'! When He says,

"If you were **of** the world the world would love its own. Yet because you are not **of** the world, but I chose you out **of** the world, the world hates you."

Jesus is speaking here, in this passage, of the believer's position as being the same as His, 'not of this world.' Let me share an insight I gleaned from Arthur Pink.

The general context of this passage of truth really begins in the closing section of chapter 14, when sitting at the supper table Jesus says to His disciples, "Arise, let us go from here!" He said this while seated with His disciples at the supper table, the Pascal meal, where the emblems of His death – the basis of our peace – were spread. But then He **gets up** from the table which prefigured His resurrection from the dead and says, "Arise, let us go from here."

It was not until after He said, "Arise, let us go from here" that He identified the disciples with Himself at that same place – on resurrection ground! And right afterward, He says, "I am the True Vine."

In Christ's word "Arise!" we see a symbolic action that *prefigures* Him on resurrection ground and us with Him. This is in full agreement to the following passage relating the truth of Jesus as the Vine and our union with Him."

And now, we return to the passage of scripture which we began with this evening in John 17, verses 14-16 which speaks so clearly of **our** position in Christ,

"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are 'not of the world,' just as I am 'not of the world.'

I do not pray that You should take them out of the world but that You should keep them from the evil one.

They are 'not of the world' just as I am 'not of the world'."

What a powerful truth this is in scripture! As we stay here in this passage for a while, the Holy Spirit may impress on our spirits the reality of this truth that **we are 'not of this world'** and as He does, we begin to leap for joy! We say to ourselves what a liberating truth this is! I am free from this world! I am 'not of this world,' just as Jesus is 'not of this world!'

Then, after awhile, as time goes by and our emotions begin to calm down, we begin to feel the same old way that we did before receiving this truth. And we begin to question ourselves as to how this can be true, that I am 'not of this world'? We may say to ourselves,

- I know what my birth certificate says, I was born in 1947 in Saint Jude's Hospital in Santa Ana, California.
- I certainly know who my parents are.
- I know my family origin.
- I know where I went to school, and
- Where I graduated.

Sounds pretty radical to me! How can this be? The answer to our question is that we as Christians have been born again! We have been born anew! We have received a birth of a 'different kind.' We have been born from above (John 3:7)!

It's true!

Scripture teaches that heaven is not only the origin of our rebirth but where, in spirit, we live!

Scripture teaches us in Hebrews 3:1, that we are "a holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" and then we learn from Philippians 3:20 that "our citizenship is in heaven." As new creations, born from above, our **origin** and **abode**, our dwelling place, and our home is in heaven! As a new creation in Christ, our origin **has never** been of this world.

In closing, a quote from Watchman Nee will may help us lay a hold of this profound truth. He says,

"Heaven is not a place that the church will reach at some future date. The church is there, and never was anywhere else.

(Being born from above), heaven is both the **origin** and the **abode** of the church but not her destination.

This may seem a drastic statement but it is a fact! Like everything else in the Word of God it is something to be seen by the Holy Spirit's revelation to our hearts and not till we see it do we **know** our heavenly calling.

That calling does not call us into heaven, but **makes known** in us that we are **of** heaven and **in** heaven, this is our position in Christ!"

We are born from above, heaven is both the **origin** and the **abode** of the church. If Jesus says to us that He has sent us **into** the world, it must settle for us once and for all that we are 'not **of** this world! We have come from Another Place, we have been born from above (John 3:7). In I Peter 2:9, the Holy Spirit tells us that, we

"are a chosen generation, a **royal** priesthood, a **holy** nation, God's own special people (our identity), that we may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (our purpose)."

It is exciting to discover that in this passage, the word 'holy' in the Greek means literally "set apart for the service of Deity." And the word 'royal' is the translation of the Greek word for 'king,' which powerfully emphasizes the kingly nature of those who are in Christ. So what this passage is saying to us is that:

We are king-priests.
We are holy.
We are set apart for the service of Deity!
We are a chosen generation — a race, a body with a common Life, the Life of the glorified Christ!
We are "a royal priesthood, a holy nation."
We are set apart for the service of Deity.

What a high calling!

But, do we know it?

We are *ambassadors* of the King of Kings, the Sovereign of the universe sent into this world to demonstrate in both word and deed that we are 'not of this world.'

We are residents of a Kingdom 'not of this world' and we are here to proclaim that Jesus is Lord and that our God reigns!

But, do we know it?

For Further Reflection:

WORSHIP AND THE KINGDOM

from The Spirit Filled Life Bible by Jack Hayford

CONSIDER JESUS

from The Holiest of All by Andrew Murray

1 PETER 2:9

from The Pulpit Commentary

KING

from <u>The Names of Christ</u> By Frances H. Derk

Worship and the Kingdom

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. I Peter 2:9

As a "royal priesthood," the kingly nature of the redeemed worshiper is noted. This passage is rooted in God's call to ancient Israel (Exodus 19:5-7). Peter and John (Revelation 1:5-6) draw this truth to full application and prophetic fulfillment in the New Testament believer.

As with Israel, deliverance through the blood of the Lamb is but the beginning. As promised, dominion and destiny will unfold as their priestly duty is fulfilled. True authority is always related to a walk in purity and a constancy in worship. The spirit of worship is essential to all advance of the kingdom. Just as ancient Israel will only take the Promised Land while doing battle from a foundation of righteous worship before the Lord, so with the contemporary church.

We will only experience promised power for evangelism and spiritual victories as we prioritize and grow in our worship of the living God. Kingdom power is kept from pollution this way, as kingdom people keep humbly praiseful before the King – witness His works of power with joy (Revelation 1:5-6).

Jack Hayford From the Spirit Filled Life Bible

Consider Jesus From The Holiest of All by Andrew Murray

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Hebrews 3:1

Consider Jesus! This is the central thought of the verse, and of the passage of which it is a part, as it is indeed of the whole Epistle. It is the one aim of the writer to persuade the Hebrews that, if they but knew aright the Lord Jesus as the faithful, compassionate, and almighty High Priest in heaven, they would find in Him all they needed for a life such as God would have them lead. Their life would be in harmony with their faith, in harmony with the life of Him whom their faith would apprehend. The words might have been taken as the title of my book: Consider Jesus! is indeed the keynote of the Epistle.

The word consider, from the root of the Latin word for Star, originally means to contemplate the stars. It suggests the idea of the astronomer, and the quiet, patient, persevering, concentrated gaze with which he seeks to discover all that can be possibly known of the stars which the object of his study are. And Jesus, who is God, who became man, and perfected our human nature in His wonderful life of suffering and obedience, and now dwells in heaven to communicate to us its life and blessedness—oh, what reason there is for saying, Consider Jesus. Gaze upon Him, contemplate Him. For some increased knowledge of the stars what devotion, what enthusiasm, what sacrifices are ofttimes witnessed. Oh, let the study and possession of the Son of God waken our devotion and our enthusiasm, that we may be able to tell men what beauty and what glory there is in Jesus.

Holy brethren! Thus the Hebrews are now addressed. In the previous chapter the word brethren had been used twice. He is not ashamed to call them brethren. It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren. The sacred name is now applied personally: Christ's brethren are brethren in Christ. And the heart of the writer warms to them personally, as he seeks to urge them to what with him is indeed the one aim of the Epistle—Consider Jesus.

Holy brethren! The word holy had also been just used. He that sanctifieth, maketh holy, and they who are sanctified, made holy, are all of one. We saw how holiness is the common mark of Christ and His people: their bond of union, and the great object they both aim at. One of the great mysteries the Epistle is to reveal to us is that our great High Priest has opened the way for us into the Most Holy Place or the Holiest of All. In Hebrew it is the Holiness of Holinesses. There we have boldness of access, there we are to have our dwelling encircled by the holiness of God. We must know that we are holy in Christ; this will give us courage to enter into the Holiness of Holinesses, to have God's holiness take complete possession, and fill our whole being. It is Jesus who makes holy: it is we who are to be made holy: what more natural than that the thoughts should be coupled together: holy brethren, consider Jesus.

Holy brethren! partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus! What is elsewhere spoken of as a holy calling is here named a heavenly calling. That does not only mean a calling from heaven, or a calling to the heaven, whence the call proceeds. No, there is much more in it. Heaven is not only a place, but a state, a mode of existence, the life in which the presence of God is revealed and experienced in its unhindered power. And the heavenly calling is that in which the power of the heavenly life works to make our life heavenly. When Jesus was upon earth the kingdom of heaven was nigh at hand; after He had ascended and received the kingdom from the Father, the kingdom of heaven came to this earth in power, through the descent of the Holy Spirit. Christians, at Pentecost, were people who by the new birth entered into the heavenly kingdom or state of life. And the kingdom entered into them. And they were partakers of a heavenly calling, because the spirit and the life and the power of heaven was within them.

It is to such men the invitation comes. Holy brethren! partakers of the heavenly calling! consider Jesus! If you would know what it is to be holy and to live holy, consider Jesus who makes holy! If you would know the privileges and powers that belong to you as partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus! He is God, the King of heaven! He is Man who has ascended to heaven as your Priest and Saviour, has

opened it for you, and can communicate its life and blessedness. Oh, consider Jesus! set your heart on Him; He will make you holy and heavenly.

There is more than one of my readers who mourns that he knows so little what it is to live a holy and a heavenly life. Listen, God's word speaks to you—Holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling! consider Jesus! This is your weakness: you have looked at yourself and your own strength; you have not studied Jesus! This will be your cure: each day, each hour, consider Jesus, and in Him you will find all the holiness and the heavenliness you need.

- 1. In the latter part of the Epistle all the glory of Jesus as He entered heaven, and opened it for us, as He became a minister of the heavenly sanctuary, and leads us to dwell in the Father's presence, will be opened to us. But let us even now, from the commencement, hold fast the truth that the knowledge of Jesus seated in heaven is the power of the heavenly calling and the heavenly life.
- 2. Do not think that you know all that can be told about Jesus. Believe that there are wonders of heavenly joy to be revealed to you if you know Him better: His divine nearness and oneness with you, His ever-present indwelling to succour and lead you, His power to bring you into the Hollest of All, Into the Father's presence and love, and to keep you there, will be revealed.

I Peter 2:9

From The Pulpit Commentary

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a 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

But ye are a chosen generation. The pronoun "ye" is emphatic. St. Peter is drawing a contrast between the disobedient and unbelieving Jews and Christian people whether Jews or Gentiles; he ascribes to Christians, in a series of phrases quoted from the Old Testament, the various privileges which had belonged to the children of Israel. The words, "a chosen generation" (γένος ἐκλεκτόν), are from Isaiah 43:20, Γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν. The Cornerstone is elect, precious; the living stones built thereupon are elect likewise. The whole Christian Church is addressed as an elect race, one race, because all its members are begotten again of the one Father.

A royal priesthood. Instead of "holy," as in verse 5, St. Peter has here the epithet "royal." He follows the Septuagint Version of Exodus 19:6; the Hebrew has "a kingdom of priests." The word "royal" may mean that God's elect shall sit with Christ in his throne, and reign with him (Revelation 3:21; 5:10), and that in some sense they reign with him now over their lower nature, their desires and appetites; or, more probably, the priesthood of Christians is called "royal" because it belongs to the King — "a priesthood serving Jehovah the King, just as we speak of 'the royal household" (Weiss, quoted by Huther).

An holy nation. Also from Exodus 19:6. The Israelites were a holy nation as separated from the heathen and consecrated to God's service by circumcision. Christians of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, are one nation under one King, separated to his service, dedicated to him in holy baptism.

A peculiar people. The Greek words. λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, represent the words, Του, of Deuteronomy 7:6, translated by the LXX. λαὸν περιούσιον, "a special people" (Authorized Version). St. Paul also has this translation in Titus 2:14. The Hebrew word Του in Malachi 3:17 is rendered by the LXX. εἰς περιποίησιν, by the Authorized Version "my jewels." The children of Israel are called Τητ Πουλο, as the peculium, the private, special, treasured possession of God. God says of them, in Isaiah 43:21, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise;" rendered by the LXX. Λαόν μου ὂν περιεποιησάμην τὰςἀρετάς μου διηγεῖσθαι, God hath now chosen us Christians to be the Israel of God; the Christian Church is his peculium, his treasure, "a people for God's own possession" (Revised Version). The literal meaning of the Greek words used by St. Peter is "a people for acquisition," or "for keeping safe," the verb having the sense of "gaining, acquiring," and also that of "preserving, keeping for one's self" (comp. 1 Thessalonians 5:9; also Acts 20:28, "The Church of God, which he purchased (ἢν περιεποιήσατο) with his own blood").

That ye should show forth the praises of him. That ye should tell out, publish abroad. The verb is found nowhere else in the New Testament. The word translated "praises" (ἀρετάς, literally, "virtues"), so very common in classical writers, occurs in the New Testament only here, 2 Peter 1:3, 5, and Philippians 4:8. Here St. Peter is quoting from the Septuagint Version of Isaiah 43:21 (the word is similarly used in Isaiah 42:12 and 63:7). Perhaps the best rendering is that of the Revised Version, "excellencies."

Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. He had chosen them before the foundation of the world; he called them when they received the gospel: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." He called them out of the darkness of ignorance and sin. The Gentiles walked in utter darkness, in less measure the Jews also. The light of his presence is marvelous, wonderful; those who walk in that light feel something of its irradiating glory.

King

This is probably the most august and far-reaching of His titles. Old and New Testament carry out this idea (Acts 17:7; Isa. 6:5; John 12:41).

He is a King by divine prerogative. Designated as the King of Glory (Ps. 24:7-10; 50:1-5; Acts 22:11; I Cor. 2:8; II Cor. 3:10; Eph. 4:9; Phil. 2:9-11; Luke 2:32; Heb. 1:3; 2:7; John 12:41; 17:5). He is pictured as enthroned (Ps. 2:6; Eph. 1:20-22). See book of Revelation. He is the Eternal King (Micah 5:2; I Tim. 1:17).

In relation to Israel He is the King of Israel (Matt. 27:42; Mark 15:32; John 1:49; 12:13). He is God's King (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17; I Sam. 2:9-10; Ps. 2:6; Acts 13:33). A prophesied King (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5; John 12:15; Isa. 6:5; John 12: 38-41). He is the covenant King (II Sam. 7:4-16; I Chron. 17:10-14; II Sam. 23:1-5).

This is based on the covenant God made with David. His human claim was valid, yet the Old Testament teaches that King Messiah is far above human attainment (Ps. 2:1-7; John 1:49; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1; Acts 15:14-17; Ps. 89:35-36; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 12:8; Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 21:9; 22:41; Mark 10:47; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:30, 36; 13:23; Rom. 1:3). He was indeed the King of the Jews, the Messianic King (Isa. 32:1; 33:17, 22; 43:15; 44:6; Ezek. 37:22, 24; Matt. 2:2; 27:11, 19, 37; Mark 15:26).

His Kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36; I Tim. 6:13-15), but of the Kingdom of God and heaven, of which He spake so much (I Tim. 1:17; 6:13-16). He is Priest-King of the Church (Ps. 110; Heb. 7:1-3). Believers are a "royal priesthood" (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6).

In relation to the world He is pictured in a different light. In contrast He is a righteous King (Isa. 32:1; Heb. 7:2; Ps. 72:1-4; John 18:37-38; 19:3-6). He is a King by right of conquest (I Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16). He is the "King of Kings" (Ps. 89:27; I Tim. 1:17; 6:15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; 19:6-16).

See Matt. 28:18; Rev. 11:15. "Thy kingdom come," we pray.

From The Names of Christ by Francis H. Derk

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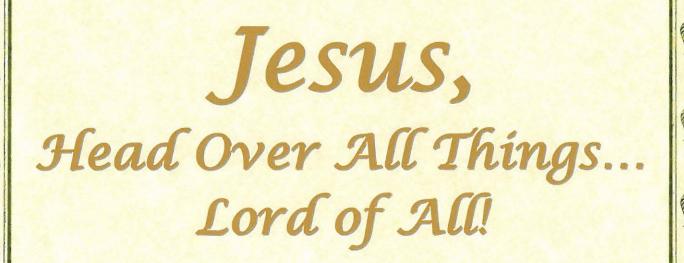
References

All scripture is from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Birthright by David Needham

The Gospel of John by Arthur Pink

What Shall This Man Do? by Watchman Nee



Jesus is the Head over every power and authority and as such is bestowed on the church for her advantage! There is given to the church, and for the church's benefit, a Head who is also Head over all things. The church has authority and power to overcome all opposition because Her Leader and Head is Lord of All.

Week 5 of 6

Well of Life Ministries

Altha Burts

Jesus, Head over All Things... Lord of All!

October 13, 2003

As we journeyed through various passages in the book of John last week, the Holy Spirit led us into some very powerful truths regarding our identity in Christ.

Things which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (I Corinthians 2:9).

Eternal truths - those things eternal which exist as much *now* as they ever will, but *now* only visible to the eye of faith (I Corinthians 2:9; II Corinthians 3:18).

One of these truths unveiled to us last week is that "we are not of this world, just as Jesus is not of this world," that our origin is from above. We are reborn. We have had a birth of a different kind. And, as new creations our origin of birth has never been of this world (John 3:7)! Jesus declares this to be true about us in several passages. One such passage is John 17:14-16 where we hear Him praying to the Father,

"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

Oh how our faith rises when we hear our Lord say to us *personally* that "we are not of this world, just as He was not of this world" (John 17:14; Romans 10:17).

We want to continue on this evening, looking at another passage of scripture which will open up this truth even more fully to us, adding to the tapestry of our faith.

Lets give our attention to a passage often quoted but perhaps one that is sometimes misunderstood, I John 3:1-2,

¹Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be **like** Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

"We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

When you first read this passage, you might say to yourself, "I don't need to be concerned about change, someday I will be different! I'll be a different 'kind' of person, I'll be like Jesus, when I see Him face to face."

Or someone else might say to you, perhaps during a time of deep struggle, "Don't worry, you will be a different kind of person when the Lord comes back. We will be holy then, our struggles will end! We will be righteous, victorious, and even enthroned. We will be like Jesus. Just keep your sights on that!" In other words we will be like Jesus when we die!

I think it's common when we hear the words in I John 3:2, "we shall be **like** Him" to think that it means that it is not until we die (or He comes back) that we will be **like** Him. How many of you have had thought these thoughts, or similar ones? But let me share with you, that this not what this passage is saying to us.

True, our *behavior* will be perfect then, but nowhere in scripture does it say that when we die our *essential nature* changes. In fact, a careful look at the passage reveals that such an idea was **not** in John's mind at all! Later on John says,

"... as He is, so are we in this world" (I John 4:17).

Nowhere does the Bible tell us that after we die that God will change our *essential nature*. David Needham says, "The Bible says only one thing about what happens to Christians when they die. We leave our mortal bodies behind!" We find this theme in several passages,

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

Philippians 3:20-21

"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

II Corinthians 5:8

No mention, in these passages, that to be absent from the body and present with the Lord would bring a change in my *essential nature*, in who I really am.

You may be asking yourselves, why is this truth so important for me to know? Why is coming to the knowledge of 'this truth' so vital for us? What effect will it have on my life personally? Right here and right now, where I live in my stressful circumstances? I assure you that *coming to the knowledge of this truth* will have a profound effect upon your life (John 8:32)!

Let me share with you personally how my own life was affected by **not** knowing this truth. How the absence of knowledge served to undermine my faith, especially when it came to prayer warfare (Hosea 4:6).

My reasoning went something like this, if I am not **like** Jesus *now*, (but will be only when I die), then Satan and his kingdom presently still have power over me. And, if my living authoritatively over Satan and his kingdom comes either when I die or as I reach a particular stage of growth in

the Lord, then how will I *know* when I have grown *enough* to be able to live victoriously over the kingdom of darkness?

Other questions continued. How long will it take for me to become enough **like** Jesus to know that I am totally accepted by the Father? How many right choices do I need to make in order to be 'pleasing' to God? And, how will I know when I have made enough? How long will it take to get there?

These were just a few of my *feeling questions*, even though I may not have been *consciously thinking* of them. Through prayerfully processing with the Lord, He led me more deeply into His word.

The Holy Spirit once again opened the eyes of my understanding. This revelation that I'm going to share with you has deeply anchored me during my Christian journey (Ephesians 1:17-18; Colossians 2:6-10).

What I came to *realize* is this, it is not how far I have come in 'time,' in personal growth, that is to be focused on, but **what He has accomplished** in 'eternity,' that is the issue. And, that is *what* I need to be beholding! His Person and His finished work, not my process was what I needed to focus on (II Corinthians 3:17-18; I Corinthians 3:9).

When we look more closely at the meaning of I John 3:2, we come to understand that the passage does not say death will cause or bring a change in our *essential nature*. This was not in John's mind, for we know later on he says, "...as He is so are we in this world" (I John 4:17).

So this passage must be saying something different, and it certainly is! A truth once appropriated will profoundly change our thinking (Romans 12:1-2).

Regarding this passage of truth, David Needham says in his book, "Alive for the First Time,"

"John was anticipating with great joy the day when 'we will see Him as He is.'

Why will we see Him as He is? Because we too will have glorified resurrection *bodies*. Bodies – eyes, emotions, minds – capable of not only enduring but enjoying the God "who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see" (I Timothy 6:16).

We shall see Him as He is because we will have received our glorified bodies. We shall see Him as He is because we will be *capable* of doing so!

But make no mistake, it is written! Presently... "as He is so are we in this world" (I John 4:17)."

Gaebelien open ups this truth even further when he says:

"Positionally, we are right now, 'as He is.' We are so closely identified with Christ, as members of His body, that our position in this world is **like** His exalted position in heaven. As He is in His exalted position, so we are in this world."

This is the secret of our confidence, assurance, and boldness. This is the secret of our faith!

Now, lets move into a passage of scripture, which will serve to build upon the truths of our identity in Christ and move us on to yet another *view* of the glory of Jesus. This time our focused passage will be in the first chapter of Ephesians verses 17-23.

Paul addressed this letter to the **saints** who are in Ephesus. He could have just as well said to the **saints** in Sunnyvale, for this letter includes all of us who are new creations in Christ, those of us who are **saints**.

It is important for us to remember that the word 'saint' is never a merely religious title in the Bible, but a declared 'state of being.' Saints are holy people, so called by God, because He has made them holy through His salvation (Jack Hayford).

In other words, 'saints' are those who are 'in this world but not of it...' saints are no more of this world than Jesus is of this world (John 17:14, 16).

Now Paul spends the first part of the chapter (verses 3-14) describing the spiritual blessings we have in Christ. We have touched on many of them in our study and will continue to do so in our time together so we will not go through them this evening.

The portion of scripture that I want to focus on is verses 17-23 where Paul prays for his readers,

¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may *know* what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who **believe**, according to the working of His mighty power

²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

²²And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* **head over all** *things* to the church,

²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:17-23

In verses 17-18, Paul's prayer was for the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory to give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

His prayer was that the Holy Spirit who indwells their spirit would also **move** upon their spirit to reveal Jesus, to unveil **Jesus** to them **and** *their* own lofty position in Him. He is praying that the truth of their own 'high calling' in Christ would be revealed to them.

Paul wants them to 'see' things clearly. He wants them to 'see' the riches of the glory of their privileges as saints – those who were born from above – those who are not of this world just as Jesus is not of this world (John 17:14, 16). Of course, this prayer is for us as well.

And when we come to verse 19 we read, "and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who *believe*." We find a new object of knowledge brought forward here – knowledge of a power which works in and through the believer – a great power, a divine power, a power surpassing greatness, the Lord's power.

In order to help us better understand the meaning of this particular word for 'power,' Strong's Concordance says,

The word 'power' here in this verse is *kratos* which means dominion, strength, and manifested power. The word especially signifies an exerted strength, power shown effectively in a reigning authority. *Kratos* primarily refers to God's kingdom authority, dominion, and majesty.

The same word, *kratos*, is used for 'power' in Ephesians 6:10 where Paul says, "Finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord and the *power* of His might" (Spirit Filled Life Bible).

Paul wants his readers to come to a full knowledge of the *power* that is resident in and works through those who *believe*! Dakes adds, "Again and again the Apostle emphasizes the doctrine of power for believers, not unbelievers (Ephesians 1:19; 3:16-21; 6:10-18; I Corinthians 1:7; 4:18-20; 12:1-11).

Paul wanted them to come to a full knowledge of the surpassing greatness of the *power* that works in and through the believers... who believe... this is his prayer for all of us, as well.

Years ago as I was reading this passage of scripture, the Holy Spirit stopped me when I came to the word 'believe' in verse 19. He helped me to see that I didn't really 'know' (fuller knowledge) what the word 'believe' meant in this passage. As always, He was faithful to teach me what I did not know (John 16:13).

As I was reading a book by John MacMillian called the "Authority of the Believer," I began to understand for the first time what the word 'believe' really means in this verse. The Holy Spirit opened the eyes of my heart and 'enabled' me to spiritually comprehend for the first time what I thought I 'knew' before.

Let me share what I gleaned from MacMillian's comments on 'believe' in verse 19, "what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe..."

"Few comprehend the primary thought of 'belief.' It has a twofold meaning, fraught with deep significance. In it are combined two old Anglo-Saxon words; "be," to live or exist; and "lifan," which conveys the thought of accordance. Thus, to believe literally means "to live in accordance with" anything.

We are accustomed to consider "belief" as simply *mental acquiescence* with some particular truth. But its root leads us on to action; that which the minds accepts, the will must obey. We do not *truly* believe, therefore, unless our conviction is manifested in our life.

Thus understood "belief" stands on a par with its great synonym "faith," which, in its deepest sense, means not only to have trust in a person but to manifest that trust by practical committal."

As we continue on in this passage, Paul also wants us to know what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of **His power** that works in and through those who *believe*. That power is demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength.

²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

²²And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

How many of you, when you hear verse 22, "He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church," think that this verse is speaking primarily of Jesus as being the Head of His body, the church? If you have, you may be recalling other passages in scripture that have to do with His being the Head of the church, thinking that this passage is saying the same thing. At first glance, this passage does appear to be saying just that (Ephesians 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

But, as we will see, there is an additional sublimity in this passage for us to discover, a treasure to uncover. As scripture says, we need to "distinguish the things which differ" or we lose out much revelation (Philippians 1:9 NAS Margin).

Now when Paul says in verse 22, that the Father put all things under Jesus' feet and gave Him to be Head over all things, the phrase "put under" in the Greek, is a military term meaning "to put in subjection under one." Expositors says, "the act referred to, therefore, by the aorist tense of the word is the definite gift of **absolute dominion** consequent on the **exaltation**. The raising of

Christ to God's right hand was followed by the placing of all things under His feet and making Him sovereign over all."

Make no mistake! Jesus is sovereign in every realm, He is Head over all things and He is Lord over all!

(A diagram is provided in this booklet to facilitate visually this teaching)

- He is Lord of the angelic hosts above. He created all angelic beings and they carry out His will, at His beckoning. Remember, Hezekiah *discovered* this when at our Lord's command one angel slew 185,000 Assyrians (II Kings 19:35).
- Jesus is also the Lord of all feathered hosts of the sky. His power brought the birds into being and they willingly act as messengers when needed, remember Elijah *discovered* this when the ravens fed him (I Kings 17:1-6).
- Jesus is Lord over the elements as well. Moses and all of the children of Israel *experienced* His power when they walked on dry land through the parted walls of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-29).
- Jesus is Lord over all human hosts and so we need to stop fearing man. The word says that,

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Proverbs 21:1).

- As to the hellish hosts, is not God supreme in this realm too? Satan and his realm cannot go any further than divine permission. We come to see this truth in the book of Job, don't we (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6)?
- Jesus is Lord of the animal hosts. As Daniel experienced when He closed the lions' mouths and then opened them again (Daniel 6:22).
- Jesus is likewise the Lord of all the stellar hosts: the sun, the moon, and the stars. They are His handiwork. He created them, and He controls them.

Joshua *realized* this when God made the sun stand still as he gained victory over the Amalekites (Joshua 10:13).

- All heavenly bodies move at His bidding. "When they (the wise men) heard the king they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them." The star in the East went before them because God caused it to (Matthew 2:9).
- Light and darkness are controlled by Him; as Moses learned when he stretched out His hand toward heaven, at God's command, and there was darkness over the land of Egypt (Exodus 10:22).

Herbert Lockyer, "All the Promises of the Bible"

Jesus is Head over all things...AND... He is the Head over all things to the church.

Commenting on verse 22, Gaebelien tell us that,

"We might have expected the Apostle to explain as elsewhere that, as Head over everything, Christ is Head of His body, the company of believers. But that is not how he puts it. Instead, he says that Christ in His **exaltation** over the universe is God's gift to the church. He is "the Head over every power and authority" (Colossians 2:10) and as such is bestowed on the church for her advantage!

There is given to the church, and for the church's benefit, a Head who is also **Head** over all things. The church has authority and power to overcome all opposition because Her Leader and Head is... Lord of all! (Acts 10:36)"

Jesus is the Head over all things and as such is bestowed on the church for her advantage! But do we know it?

His being Head over all things therefore implies not only His dominion over all things but our *union* with Him in that dominion (Ephesians 2:6). Gaebelein opens this up when he says,

"When we speak of the church which is His body, it denotes the complete vital life union of the church with the Lord Jesus, the absolute identification of believers with Him (I Corinthians 12:12). This includes His present enthronement!

Christ being Head over all things to the church means that Christ is at once immanent within the church and transcendent over it, as He is both within and above the universe. This carefully balanced statement of Christ's role, 'He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,' was designed to encourage the church **militant** here on earth."

In closing, Jesus, the Head over all things, the Lord of All says to us in Revelation 3:21,

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down on My Father's throne."

Jesus did not say, to him who dies will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, He said, "To him who overcomes." Who are the overcomers?

Overcomers are simply believers, in Christ, who *believe* what God says is true, acts upon it, and holds on to it in spite of all that seems to contradict it (I John 5:4-5).

Overcomers are those who walk in the eternal realities revealed in scripture... eternal realities which are present but are only 'seen' through the eye of faith (Hebrews 11:1).

Overcomers are believers who walk in the reality of those things which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (I Corinthians 2:9).

We have come to 'see' this evening that it is not death that leads us to *experience* the enthroned life - it is *believing*, it is **faith**!

I'd like to share a quote from one of my favorite books, "The Enthroned Christian," by F.J Huegel which will help us see more deeply the relationship between 'believe' and 'faith,'

"The Christian 'in spirit' is to share his Savior's throne here and now. His position among the children of men may be the humblest, yet in spirit he stands in vital union with the enthroned Christ of God. The New Testament nowhere attributes to death — mere physical dissolution — any power to lift the soul to higher planes of existence than what are already a fact in embryo. It is only **faith** that can do this. **Faith**, not physical death, will bring us to Christ and His throne."

As Jesus said to Martha, He says to us this evening...

"Did I not say to you that if you would *believe* you would 'see' My glory..." (John 11:40)

Are we among those believers who believe?

For Further Reflection:

LORD OF HOSTS from The Pulpit Commentary

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-10 THE GOSPELSCHOOL from The Pulpit Commentary

THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST EPHESIANS 1:20-23 from Dakes Annotated Commentary

Lord of Hosts

From the Pulpit Commentary

- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, fills us with humility, reverence, and adoration.
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, encourages us to pray with strong confidence that we shall be heard (I Samuel 1:11; Zechariah 8:1; Matthew 26:53; Ephesians 3:20).
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts strengthens us in labor "work for I am with you, sayeth the Lord of Hosts" (Haggai 2:4).
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, will console us in trouble, "The Lord will protect His own" (Psalm 34:7; Isaiah 8:13). He is the Protector and Avenger of the oppressed (James 5:4).
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, incites us to contend against His foes, to "fight the good fight of faith." As David said to the Philistine, "You come in to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin, but I come to you in the Name of the Lord of Hosts..." (I Samuel 17:45).

I Corinthians 2:6-10

⁶However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

⁷But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

⁸which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

¹⁰But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

The Gospel School

From "The Pulpit Commentary" commenting on I Corinthians 2:6-10

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit," etc. *Because* man naturally craves for knowledge and deeply needs it, schools abound everywhere throughout the civilized world, especially here in England — schools of science, schools of philosophy, schools of art, etc. But there is *one* school that transcends all — the gospel school. Three facts are suggested concerning this school.

- I. That here the student is INSTRUCTED IN THE SUBLIMEST REALITIES. "Deep things of God." Things, not words, not theories. "Deep things;" deep because undiscoverable by human reason; deep because they come from the fathomless ocean of Divine love. What are these deep things? The primary elements of the gospel, and the necessary condition of soul restoration. These "deep things" we are here told are:
 - 1. The free gifts of Heaven. "Freely given to us of God."
 - 2. Freely given to be *communicated*. "Which things also we speak," etc. He who gets these things into his mind and heart, not only can communicate, but is bound to tell them to others, and that in plain natural language, free from the affectations of rhetoric, the language which the "Holy Ghost teacheth," language which is suggested by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Men think in words; thoughts come dressed in their own language; the intellectual thoughts have their own language, and spiritual thoughts have a language all their own.
- II. That here the student is TAUGHT BY THE GREATEST TEACHER. Who is the Teacher? The Divine Spirit himself, here called the "Spirit of God" and the" Holy Ghost."
 - 1. This Teacher has infinite knowledge. "The Spirit searcheth all things." The word "searcheth" must not be taken, I presume, in the sense of investigation, but rather in the

- sense of complete knowledge. In the last clause of the next verse it is said, "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." He knoweth those things of God; he knows them in their essence, number, issues, hearings, relations, etc.
- 2. This Teacher is no other than God himself. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The implication is that this Spirit is as truly God as man's mind is man. No one knows the things in man's mind but man himself; no one knows the "deep things of God" but God himself. "Who teacheth like God?" He knows thoroughly the nature of the student, and how best to indoctrinate that nature with his own "deep things."
- III. That here the student MUST DEVELOP HIS HIGHER NATURE. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Man has a threefold nature, designated by St. Paul as soma, psyche, and pneuma — body, soul, and spirit. The first is the animal, the second is the mental, and the third the moral or spiritual. This is the conscience, with its intuitions and sympathies, and this is the chief part of man, nay, the man himself, the core of his being, that which Paul calls" the inner man," the man of the man. Now, this part of the man alone can receive the "things of the Spirit of God." Set these things before the "natural man," his mere body; they are no more to him than Euclid to a brute. Set them before the mere psychical or intellectual man, and what are they? Puzzles over which he will speculate; nay, they are "foolishness unto him." Mere intellect cannot understand love, cannot appreciate right. It concerns itself with the truth or falsehood of propositions, and the advantages and disadvantages of conduct — nothing more. Moral love only can interpret and feel the things of moral love, the "deep things of God." Hence this moral pneuma, this spiritual nature, this conscience must be roused from its dormancy, and become the ascendant nature before the "things of the Spirit" can be "discerned," and then the man shall judge all things, all spiritual things, whilst he himself will not be judged rightly by any "natural man." "For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" Who, thus uninstructed, can "know the mind of the Lord"?

The Headship of Christ

From "Dakes Annotated Commentary" commenting on Ephesians 1:20-23

²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

²²And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

14-fold headship of Christ (Eph.1:20-23)

1 All principality (v 21; Col. 2:10) 2 All power (v 21; Col. 2:10) 3 All might (v 21) 4 Dominion (v 21; Col. 1:16-18)

5 Every name (v 21; Phil. 2:9;

Heb. 1:4)

6 This world (Eph. 1:21)

7 The world to come (Eph. 1:21)

8 All things (Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:8-9)

9 The church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23-31; Col. 1:18, 24; 2:19)

10 Every man (1 Cor. 11:3)

11 Of the corner (Mt. 21:42; Lk. 20:

17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7)

12 The people (Isa. 55:4) 13 Over all (Rom. 9:5; Col. 3:11)

14 His own house (Heb. 3:6)

6 things God did for Christ (Eph.1: 20-23)

1 Raised Him from the dead (v 20; 1

Cor. 15:1-23; note k, Jn. 21:14) 2 Exalted Him at His own right hand

(v 20; Ps. 110:1, 5; Mt. 26:64; Mk. 16: 19; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13;

10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22)

3 Gave Him authority over all powers, good and evil, under Himself (v 21; 3:10; 6:12; Rom. 8:38; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:15-18; 2:10-17; 1 Pet. 3:22;

Rev. 1:1, 7, 18; 11:15; 19:11-20:10) 4 Gave Him a name above every name except God the Father (v 21; 1

Cor. 11:3; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:4) 5 Put all things under His feet (v 22; Col. 1:16-18; 2:10-17; Heb. 2:5-18; 1

Cor. 15:24-28)

6 Gave Him headship of the church (v 22; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Cor. 11:3)

Notes

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References

All scripture is from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

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Alive for the First Time by David Needham

Dake's Annotated Reference Bible by Finis Jennings Dake

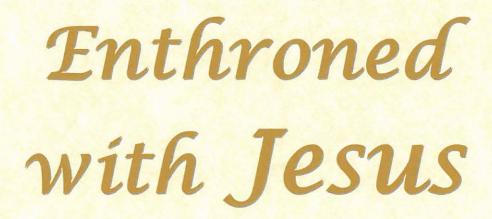
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Strong's Concordance



Ephesians 2:6

"Positionally, we are right now, 'as He is.' We are so closely identified with Christ, as members of His body, that our position in this world is like His exalted position in heaven." As He is in His exalted position, so we are in this world" (Gaebelein).

Week 6 of 6

Well of Life Ministries

Altha Burts

Enthroned with Jesus

October 20, 2003

Several years ago when I was studying the book of Hebrews I was stopped by the Holy Spirit when I came to chapter 3, verse 1. I had read this passage several times but this time was different. I knew there was something the Lord wanted to show me. And I believe He has something to unveil to you this evening as well.

If you have your Bibles with you, turn with me to Hebrews 3, verse 1. This passage of scripture may be familiar to some of you but lets glean from it with new eyes this evening,

"Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (RSV).

I was struck by this word *consider*. It seemed to me that this was central in this passage but I really didn't know what it meant, not in its deeper sense. My first impression of the word was that it had a sound of passivity to it... I knew something was wrong in my thinking. Scripture would never have such a passive stance when it came to Jesus, that I knew.

In my study time, I began reading Andrew Murray's book, "The Holiest of All" which is a devotional study on the book of Hebrews. And, when I came to Hebrews 3:1, the word 'consider' was defined for me and that is when I really *heard* what the Holy Spirit was calling me to do!

"The word 'consider,' from the root of the Latin word for star, originally means to contemplate the stars. It suggests the idea of the astronomer, and the quiet, patient, preserving, concentrated gaze with which he seeks to discover all that can be possibly known of the stars which the object of his study are."

Did you hear that, a quiet, patient, preserving, concentrated gaze with which you seek to discover all that can be possibly known of Jesus? This is what is meant.... to **consider Jesus**.

Spurred on by the Holy Spirit, I began my journey of considering the PERSON OF JESUS as He is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. As I began spending large segments of time, especially in the early morning hours, contemplating Him; reflecting on His glory, His love, His power, His authority, His holiness, His sacrificial death, and His glorification there seemed to be questions forming in my spirit, in the inner sanctuary of my heart. They went something like this:

- How high is your thinking when you have thoughts of Jesus?
- What comes to your mind when you hear His name?
- Are you reflecting on Him in the early morning hours and going away, after your Bible is closed, forgetting what He looks like?

Probing questions, aren't they?

I was convicted and grieved by the *realization* that my thoughts were not high enough of Jesus when I heard His name. I was not giving Him the time nor exercising the discipline that it requires to have these high thoughts of Him abide *deeply* in my heart (I Peter 3:15).

I realized that my thoughts of Jesus were not high enough. And I was grieved. Somehow, the name JESUS had become too familiar, heard too many times, and that familiarity was somehow blocking me from truly 'seeing' His glory. A.W. Tozer says in his book, "The Knowledge of the Holy,"

"What comes into our minds, when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God.

Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, 'What comes into your mind when you think about God?' we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man."

As I continued *considering* Jesus, I was personally persuaded that we as a church, need to behold Jesus more and more and have our contemplation of HIM become the central place of our activities. I became convinced that we needed to *know* Him more deeply, abide in Him more fully in order to manifest His glory through our lives... His glory as it was evidenced in the early church (in Acts).

The Holy Spirit Himself will lead us on in such a pursuit (John 16:14). For He delights to bear witness of Christ and reveal Jesus to us, this is His work (John 15:26). Always pointing to Jesus, the Holy Spirit never exalts Himself. But He always directs our attention to the Lord Jesus!

Last week we spent time *considering* Jesus, didn't we? We concentrated our gaze and beheld Him in His glory as "Head over all things" (II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 1:22).

As we looked into the meaning of what that title meant the Holy Spirit began to remove veils from our hearts. We began to have a glimpse of the Person of Jesus as the Head over all things – Lord of All! As we saw Him 'this way' our faith began to rise, didn't it (Romans 10:17)?

We learned that being Head over all things:

• Jesus is Lord of the angelic hosts above (II Kings 19:35).

- He is Lord of all feathered hosts (I Kings 17:1-6).
- He is Lord of the animal hosts (Daniel 6:22).
- He is Lord over the elements as well (Exodus 14:21-29).
- He is Lord over all human hosts (Proverbs 21:1).
- Jesus is Head over all hellish hosts (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6); demoniacs are healed at the mere sound of His voice (Luke 8:28-35) and the lepers returned to health at the mere touch of His hand (Matthew 8:1-4).
 - Jesus has authority over all the sickness and disease (Acts 10:38).
- Jesus is likewise the Lord of all the stellar hosts: the sun, the moon, and the stars (Joshua 10:13).
- All heavenly bodies move at His bidding (Matthew 2:9).
- Light and darkness are controlled by Him (Exodus 10:22).
- Jesus is Head over all things! He has authority over all things... He is Lord of All!

The Father "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). Some of us, for the first time, discovered the truth that Jesus as Head over all things has been given to the church for her benefit, for her special advantage! Jesus, as Head over all things, has been given to the church to encourage the church militant while here on earth. As Gaebelein says,

"Jesus is the Head over every power and authority and as such is bestowed on the church for her advantage! There is given to the church, and for the church's benefit, a Head who is also head over all things. The church *has* authority and power to overcome *all* opposition because Her Leader and Head is Lord of All."

But do we know it? If we do, are we walking in the light we have?

Now, we are going to return this evening to the book of Ephesians, but this time we will be looking at Ephesians 1:1-3. We're going to view 'living life in the heavenlies' from Paul's perspective and count on the Holy Spirit to open our eyes so that we might enter into that *same* perspective, and *live* there as well!

Now we know that Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ. And as an Apostle he had a profound knowledge of the Lord and his life bore witness of his intimacy with Jesus. But Paul not only *knew* Jesus deeply but he also *knew* something about himself! He was 'conscious' of his position, of his call. He knew he was in the service of Deity! He was an ambassador *of* Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:20). Being conscious of his position gave him faith and boldness. It will do the same for us!

Now lets move in to our focused passage, looking at life in the heavenlies,

¹Paul, an apostle of **Jesus Christ** by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the **heavenly places** in Christ,

Ephesians 1:1-3

In the heavenly places...

The apostle takes us to great heights in this passage, he lifts us into the 'heavenlies' and shows us the Christian's position in its greatest glory and majesty. It seemed for years that I would revisit this passage and each time my hunger grew for a deeper understanding of what this expression **heavenly places** really meant.

In dependence upon the Holy Spirit, I began my pursuit toward 'understanding' what it meant to 'live life in the **heavenly places**.' And I want to pass on to you that which I received from the Lord, truth that the Lord has opened up to me.

There are a few passages where this phrase 'heavenly places' is mentioned in this letter to the Ephesians and it might help if we look at them:

Ephesians 1:3... "Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed with every blessing in the **heavenly places**."

Ephesians 1:20... "Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in heavenly places."

Ephesians 2:6... "And raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly places."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones has an insight for us in his exposition of Ephesians,

"In using the expression 'heavenly places' the apostle is employing a descriptive term which was very popular in the first century. It was a characteristically a Jewish conception."

He goes on to say that Paul uses the same idea where he gives a bit of autobiography in II Corinthians 12 verse 2 when he says 'I knew a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — whether in the body, I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows such a man was caught up in the **third heaven**.'

The word used in Ephesians for 'heavenly places' is *derived* from the word Paul uses in II Corinthians 12:2 where he talks about being lifted up in the **third** heaven."

Lloyd-Jones opens up our understanding of this expression 'third heaven' by giving us some more Jewish background on the expression itself. He says:

- "The first heaven, according to this Jewish conception, is what may be described as the atmospheric heaven where the clouds are. That is the heaven nearest to us.
- The **second heaven**, according to this Jewish conception, can be described as the stellar heaven; it is that part of the upper regions where the sun and moon and stars are placed. This is very much further away from us than the clouds or the atmospheric heaven, and the astronomic figures used by the scientists remind us that the stellar heavens are a tremendous distance from us.
- But there is a 'third heaven' which is neither the atmospheric heaven nor the stellar heaven. This is the realm in which God, in a very special manner, manifests His presence and His glory. It is also the place where the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrected body dwells, where the glory of God is manifested the throne room of God, the Father and God the Son and the abode of all the holy angelic hosts!"

John describes the third heaven for us in the book of Revelation.

¹After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

²Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

³And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

Revelation 4:1-3

¹And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

⁶And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain...

⁷Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

⁸Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

⁹And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

¹⁰And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 5:1, 6-10

In the Greek, the phrase "we shall reign" clearly says that the reigning is **present** not future (Vincent). The saints, 'in spirit,' reign now!

What the apostle Paul tells us of his experience in II Corinthians 12 John, describes in the book of Revelation where the **third heaven** was unveiled to him. John describes for us the glory of the Father, the One who is sitting on the throne, the glory of the Son, the Lamb as though it had been slain and the surrounding beauty of the heavenly kingdom... the **third heaven**.

So as we just saw in Revelation 4 and 5, we also find in Ephesians 1:20-22 where the Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, is already in that realm in His glorified body.

"... when He (The Father) raised Him (Jesus) from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:20-22).

The Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, is already in that realm in His glorified body. So what the apostle is saying when he says we have been given *all* spiritual blessing in Christ is that all **we have** and all we receive comes from Him who is *in* that realm because we are His body "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:23).

The apostle's teaching is that we are in Christ and as such we are part of Christ; we are so bound to Him by this organic mystical union that whatever is 'true of Him' is 'true of us *spiritually*.'

So what the apostle is really saying is that... as He is in the heavenly places so we also are in the heavenly places because we are in Him.

But the apostle takes us even higher and says in Ephesians 2:6 that not only do we belong to the heavenly realm but he says that God, the Father, "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This means that at this moment we are seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In spirit, we have been enthroned with Christ. We are there; he does not say that we are going to be, but that we are there, **presently**.

The phrase 'made us sit together' in the Greek means "a seat in company with, in association with, in union with." So you see, spiritually, I am in heaven at this moment 'in Christ,' in one sense as much as I shall ever be; but my body is still living on earth, I am still in this world of time. This is what the apostle **prays** that we will be enabled to see (Ephesians 1:17)!

The Father has enthroned us with Christ 'in the heavenly realms" and He wants us to see our position in Christ and walk accordingly. A quote from Watchman Nee may help to summarize this truth for us,

"Christian progress is not a question of attaining to some abstract standard, or of pressing through to some far-off goal. It is wholly a question of seeing God's standard. You advance spiritually by finding out what you really are, not by trying to become what you hope to be. That goal you will never reach, however earnestly you strive. It is when you see you are dead that you die; it is when you see you are risen that you arise...

'Seeing' the accomplished fact determines the pathway to the *realizing* of that fact. The end is reached by seeing, not by desiring or working. The only possibility of spiritual progress lies in our *discovering* the truth as God sees it; the truth concerning Christ and the truth concerning ourselves in Christ.

From "What Shall This Man Do?"

As I close, let me share another quote from Andrew Murray, from "The Holiest of All" that might help us to understand more clearly that being enthroned with Christ in spirit is a fact to be believed because it is *true* of us, whether we are conscious of it or not.

"A traveler by train has often reached a place without his *knowing* that he is there. The guard or friend has to tell him. Often it is because, that he had expected the journey to last longer.

So deep is there in us the spirit of salvation by effort and attainment, by what we are and feel, that the rousing call is needed *continually... you* are **already there!**"

Do you know this about *yourself*? That God the Father has already enthroned *you* with Christ in spirit in the heavenly realms? **In spirit**, we are already seated with the glorified Lord Jesus upon His throne at this moment! (Ephesians 2:6).

It is a fact to *know....* a truth to be *believed*! It is a position to be *experienced*!

The question for us this evening is do we know it?

Are we *aware* that we are seated with Christ in the third heaven?

And if we are, are we consistently living the enthroned life by faith?

Or are we still earthbound, still operating in the realm of sight, the realm of sense as if we were *of* this world?

"Jesus only is our message, Jesus all our theme shall be; We will lift up Jesus only, Jesus only will we see."

A.B. Simpson

For Further Reflection:

FAR ABOVE ALL

from The Climax of the Risen Life by Jessie Penn-Lewis

THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST EPHESIANS 1:20-23

from Dakes Annotated Commentary

KING

from The Names of Christ by Frances H. Derk

LORD OF HOSTS

from The Pulpit Commentary

CONSIDER JESUS

from The Holiest of All by Andrew Murray

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

by Lawrence Richards

THE MIRACLE OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

by Herbert Lockyer

Far Above All

Ephesians 1:21

"He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand... far above all... and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:20-21; 2:6)

"Far above all!" Yes, this may be the continuous experience of every child of God. However great the difficulties, our Mighty Keeper is able to keep fully at all times, and in all places. Joined to the Risen Lord we may truly be kept "far above all" our surroundings. The enemy would use these to drag us down, but Jesus can keep us "far above" as we learn to live in His faithfulness, and cease to struggle and resist, but lie down in His will day by day and say "Yes, Lord" to all that comes.

"Far above all!" How can this be! Only by knowing God's deliverance from the life which keeps us in bondage to the things of the earth. Only by knowing in the power of the Spirit the full meaning of Calvary's Cross. Not only has Christ died that we might be "forgiven all trespasses," but the apostle Paul tells us, again and again, that we too died with Him and were buried with Him "through baptism into death" (Romans 6:4).

The one condition of setting us free to live "far above all" in the power of His endless life is "faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

But first we need to ask if we are really and honestly purposed to be separated from all that holds us down, and to let the Holy Spirit "make to die" all "doings" not of God? (Romans 8:13).

The Holy Ghost will bear witness to our death in the death of the Lord Jesus, if we are true in our desire to know all that it means, and so fully prove the life of "far above all" with the Risen Lord.

"Far above all!" If the things around us fret us, the enemy has succeeded in pulling us down enough to do it. "For freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again... in bondage" (Galatians 5:1). We need to recognize our freedom, and as we go in and out among the things that so try us, trust and praise our God that He is keeping us "far above all."

"Far above all!" Lifted above earthly things and earthly surroundings the spirit dwells in God (Psalm 90:1; 32:7; John 6:56; I John 3:24). Here it sees the King in His beauty and gets such a vision of eternal realities, that the things of time sink into their right place, and are valued at their true worth. Here it hides in the "secret place of the Most High" and finds "no plague come nigh its dwelling" (see Psalm 91:1-10). "The Eternal God is thy dwelling place" (Deuteronomy 33:27).

"Blessed are they that dwell" (Psalm 84:4).

Thy hidden ones" (Psalm 83:3)

"Hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

"Hidden in His pavilion" (Psalm 27:5).

"His chambers" (Song of Solomon 1:4). His "banqueting house" (Song of Solomon 2:4) Hidden "from the strife of tongues" (Psalm 31:20). Hidden "in the day of trouble" (Psalm 27:5). "Hidden manna" given to them (Revelation 2:17). Hidden "wisdom" revealed to them (I Corinthians 2:7; Matthew 11:25). "Hidden riches of secret places" (Isaiah 45:3). Dwelling "at ease" upon His heart" (Psalm 25:13). Dwelling in "quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:18). "In the secret place of the Most High" (Psalm 91:1).

"Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care, Not a blast of hurry, touch the spirit there."

"Far above all!" Here everything is the will of God to His child. Here we reverently say with Jesus, "the cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (notwithstanding that the cup of sorrow was given to our suffering Lord by the hand of Judas). There are no second causes to the soul hidden in God. Misunderstanding, sorrows, trials may come, but it yearns to follow, in its earthward life, the footsteps of Christ in His gentleness, meekness, lowliness and love. For "Far above all" in spirit with God makes us rejoice to be the servant of all in our intercourse with others.

"Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord" (Matthew 9:28).

From "The Climax of the Risen Life" by Jessie Penn-Lewis

The Headship of Christ

From "Dakes Annotated Commentary" commenting on Ephesians 1:20-23

²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

²²And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

14-fold headship of Christ (Eph.1:20-23)

1 All principality (v 21; Col. 2:10) 2 All power (v 21; Col. 2:10) 3 All might (v 21) 4 Dominion (v 21; Col. 1:16-18)

5 Every name (v 21; Phil. 2:9; Heb. 1:4)

Heb. 1:4)
6 This world (Eph. 1:21)
7 The world to come (Eph. 1:21)
8 All things (Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:8-9)
9 The church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15;
5:23-31; Col. 1:18, 24; 2:19)
10 Every man (1 Cor. 11:3)
11 Of the corner (Mt. 21:42; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7)
12 The people (Isa. 55:4)
13 Over all (Rom. 9:5; Col. 3:11)
14 His own house (Heb. 3:6)

14 His own house (Heb. 3:6)

6 things God did for Christ (Eph.1: 20-23)

1 Raised Him from the dead (v 20; 1

Cor. 15:1-23; note k, Jn. 21:14) 2 Exalted Him at His own right hand (v 20; Ps. 110:1, 5; Mt. 26:64; Mk. 16: 19; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13;

10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22)

3 Gave Him authority over all powers, good and evil, under Himself (v 21; 3:10; 6:12; Rom. 8:38; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:15-18; 2:10-17; 1 Pet. 3:22;

Rev. 1:1, 7, 18; 11:15; 19:11-20:10) 4 Gave Him a name above every name except God the Father (v 21; 1

Cor. 11:3; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:4) 5 Put all things under His feet (v 22; Col. 1:16-18; 2:10-17; Heb. 2:5-18; 1

Cor. 15:24-28)

6 Gave Him headship of the church (v 22; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Cor. 11:3)

King

This is probably the most august and far-reaching of His titles. Old and New Testament carry out this idea (Acts 17:7; Isa. 6:5; John 12:41).

He is a King by divine prerogative. Designated as the King of Glory (Ps. 24:7-10; 50:1-5; Acts 22:11; I Cor. 2:8; II Cor. 3:10; Eph. 4:9; Phil. 2:9-11; Luke 2:32; Heb. 1:3; 2:7; John 12:41; 17:5). He is pictured as enthroned (Ps. 2:6; Eph. 1:20-22). See book of Revelation. He is the Eternal King (Micah 5:2; I Tim. 1:17).

In relation to Israel He is the King of Israel (Matt. 27:42; Mark 15:32; John 1:49; 12:13). He is God's King (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17; I Sam. 2:9-10; Ps. 2:6; Acts 13:33). A prophesied King (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5; John 12:15; Isa. 6:5; John 12:38-41). He is the covenant King (II Sam. 7:4-16; I Chron. 17:10-14; II Sam. 23:1-5).

This is based on the covenant God made with David. His human claim was valid, yet the Old Testament teaches that King Messiah is far above human attainment (Ps. 2:1-7; John 1:49; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1; Acts 15:14-17; Ps. 89:35-36; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 12:8; Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 21:9; 22:41; Mark 10:47; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:30, 36; 13:23; Rom. 1:3). He was indeed the King of the Jews, the Messianic King (Isa. 32:1; 33:17, 22; 43:15; 44:6; Ezek. 37:22, 24; Matt. 2:2; 27:11, 19, 37; Mark 15:26).

His Kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36; I Tim. 6:13-15), but of the Kingdom of God and heaven, of which He spake so much (I Tim. 1:17; 6:13-16). He is Priest-King of the Church (Ps. 110; Heb. 7:1-3). Believers are a "royal priesthood" (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6).

In relation to the world He is pictured in a different light. In contrast He is a righteous King (Isa. 32:1; Heb. 7:2; Ps. 72:1-4; John 18:37-38; 19:3-6). He is a King by right of conquest (I Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16). He is the "King of Kings" (Ps. 89:27; I Tim. 1:17; 6:15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; 19:6-16).

See Matt. 28:18; Rev. 11:15. "Thy kingdom come," we pray.

From The Names of Christ by Francis H. Derk

Lord of Hosts

From the Pulpit Commentary

- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, fills us with humility, reverence, and adoration.
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, encourages us to pray with strong confidence that we shall be heard (I Samuel 1:11; Zechariah 8:1; Matthew 26:53; Ephesians 3:20).
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts strengthens us in labor "work for I am with you, sayeth the Lord of Hosts" (Haggai 2:4).
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, will console us in trouble, "The Lord will protect His own" (Psalm 34:7; Isaiah 8:13). He is the Protector and Avenger of the oppressed (James 5:4).
- His elevation, as the Lord of Hosts, in our hearts, incites us to contend against His foes, to "fight the good fight of faith." As David said to the Philistine, "You come in to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin, but I come to you in the Name of the Lord of Hosts..." (I Samuel 17:45).

Consider Jesus

From "The Holiest of All" by Andrew Murray

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Hebrews 3:1

Consider Jesus! This is the central thought of the verse, and of the passage of which it is a part, as it is indeed of the whole Epistle. It is the one aim of the writer to persuade the Hebrews that, if they but knew aright the Lord Jesus as the faithful, compassionate, and almighty High Priest in heaven, they would find in Him all they needed for a life such as God would have them lead. Their life would be in harmony with their faith, in harmony with the life of Him whom their faith would apprehend. The words might have been taken as the title of my book: Consider Jesus! is indeed the keynote of the Epistle.

The word consider, from the root of the Latin word for Star, originally means to contemplate the stars. It suggests the idea of the astronomer, and the quiet, patient, persevering, concentrated gaze with which he seeks to discover all that can be possibly known of the stars which the object of his study are. And Jesus, who is God, who became man, and perfected our human nature in His wonderful life of suffering and obedience, and now dwells in heaven to communicate to us its life and blessedness—oh, what reason there is for saying, Consider Jesus. Gaze upon Him, contemplate Him. For some increased knowledge of the stars what devotion, what enthusiasm, what sacrifices are ofttimes witnessed. Oh, let the study and possession of the Son of God waken our devotion and our enthusiasm, that we may be able to tell men what beauty and what glory there is in Jesus.

Holy brethren! Thus the Hebrews are now addressed. In the previous chapter the word brethren had been used twice. He is not ashamed to call them brethren. It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren. The sacred name is now applied personally: Christ's brethren are brethren in Christ. And the heart of the writer warms to them personally, as he seeks to urge them to what with him is indeed the one aim of the Epistle—Consider Jesus.

Holy brethren! The word holy had also been just used. He that sanctifieth, maketh holy, and they who are sanctified, made holy, are all of one. We saw how holiness is the common mark of Christ and His people: their bond of union, and the great object they both aim at. One of the great mysteries the Epistle is to reveal to us is that our great High Priest has opened the way for us into the Most Holy Place or the Holiest of All. In Hebrew it is the Holiness of Holinesses. There we have boldness of access, there we are to have our dwelling encircled by the holiness of God. We must know that we are holy in Christ; this will give us courage to enter into the Holiness of Holinesses, to have God's holiness take complete possession, and fill our whole being. It is Jesus who makes holy: it is we who are to be made holy: what more natural than that the thoughts should be coupled together: holy brethren, consider Jesus.

Holy brethren! partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus! What is elsewhere spoken of as a holy calling is here named a heavenly calling. That does not only mean a calling from heaven, or a calling to the heaven, whence the call proceeds. No, there is much more in it. Heaven is not only a place, but a state, a mode of existence, the life in which the presence of God is revealed and experienced in its unhindered power. And the heavenly calling is that in which the power of the heavenly life works to make our life heavenly. When Jesus was upon earth the kingdom of heaven was nigh at hand; after He had ascended and received the kingdom from the Father, the kingdom of heaven came to this earth in power, through the descent of the Holy Spirit. Christians, at Pentecost, were people who by the new birth entered into the heavenly kingdom or state of life. And the kingdom entered into them. And they were partakers of a heavenly calling, because the spirit and the life and the power of heaven was within them.

It is to such men the invitation comes. Holy brethren! partakers of the heavenly calling! consider Jesus! If you would know what it is to be holy and to live holy, consider Jesus who makes holy! If you would know the privileges and powers that belong to you as partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus! He is God, the King of heaven! He is Man who has ascended to heaven as your Priest and Saviour, has

opened it for you, and can communicate its life and blessedness. Oh, consider Jesus! set your heart on Him; He will make you holy and heavenly.

There is more than one of my readers who mourns that he knows so little what it is to live a holy and a heavenly life. Listen, God's word speaks to you—Holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling! consider Jesus! This is your weakness: you have looked at yourself and your own strength; you have not studied Jesus! This will be your cure: each day, each hour, consider Jesus, and in Him you will find all the holiness and the heavenliness you need.

1. In the latter part of the Epistle all the glory of Jesus as He entered heaven, and opened it for us, as He became a minister of the heavenly sanctuary, and leads us to dwell in the Father's presence, will be opened to us. But let us even now, from the commencement, hold fast the truth that the knowledge of Jesus seated in heaven is the power of the heavenly calling and the heavenly life.

2. Do not think that you know all that can be told about Jesus. Believe that there are wonders of heavenly joy to be revealed to you if you know Him better: His divine nearness and oneness with you, His ever-present indwelling to succour and lead you, His power to bring you into the Hollest of All, into the Father's presence and love, and to keep you there, will be revealed.

The Authority of Jesus

From Lawrence Richards

The authority of Jesus. A Roman soldier came to Jesus to ask for help. His statement then penetrated to the heart of the authority issue. He expressed the belief that if Jesus would simply speak the word, his servant would be healed, because "I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one 'Go' and he goes; and that one 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it" (Mt 8:9).

The point is this: As a military officer this man derived his authority from Rome, i.e., from the empire itself, which had chosen to extend to him the freedom of action he enjoyed in controlling the behavior of his troops. The officer's request for Jesus to simply speak a healing word was a confession of faith. The officer recognized that the authority Jesus derived from God was so complete that he was able to exercise control even over diseases. Jesus spoke and acted with full divine authority and authorization.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus' very freedom of action in teaching and healing stunned and disturbed the Jewish people (cf. Mk 1:22,27; Lk 4:32–36). Instead of constantly referring to tradition as the authority for his actions, Jesus relied on his own unmistakable aura of power. When Jesus scandalized his listeners by pronouncing the sins of a paralyzed man forgiven, he proved his authority to do so by healing him: "so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority Jexousia, freedom of action] to forgive

sins..." (Mt 9:6-8; Mk 2:10; Lk 5:24).

Despite Jesus' miracles, at the end of his ministry on earth he was still being challenged by the religious leaders who were unwilling to accept him as God's Son and messenger (Mt 21:23–29; Mk 11:28–33; Lk 20:2–8).

The Gospels, however, report many statements made by Jesus that define his authority, and the Epistles extend the authority of the now-risen Lord. While Jesus was on earth, his miracles showed his authority over nature, sickness, sin, demons, and even death itself. • Miracle/Sign/Wonder Jesus has authority to judge all humankind (Jn 5:27). The Father has "granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you [the Father] have given him" (Jn 17:2). Human beings might appear to have the power to snatch Jesus away from his friends and to take his life. But Jesus claimed, "I lay down my lifeonly to take it up again. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again" (10:17-18).

After his resurrection Jesus told his followers, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt 28:17). Jesus now has total freedom to act (cf. Col 2:10), and he does act on behalf of his body, the church (Eph 1:21-23).

Ultimately Jesus will exercise his freedom to act and will destroy every competing power, making everything subject to the direct, active will of God the Father (1 Co 15:24–28).

The Miracle of the Centurion's Servant

From Herbert Lockyer

(Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10)

Having already dealt with the error of confusing this miracle with that of the nobleman's son, it can be pointed out that both miracles do agree in representing Christ as able to cure from a distance and in the absence of the sufferers through the medium of a word. As Matthew and Luke alone among the four evangelists record this miracle, it is interesting to note the way in which each describes it. There is no conflict in presentation. Each was guided by the Holy Spirit in his version of the incident. Here, then, are some points of contrast:

Matthew wrote with Israel especially in view, and thus affords our Lord's solemn warning to the nation about many coming from afar and being blessed with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such a warning was most necessary for a people building their hopes on religious associations and privileges to the neglect of personal faith.

Luke, as a Gentile, wrote for Gentiles and therefore omits the warning to Israel and introduced instead the aspect so instructive and encouraging to Gentiles, namely, that the centurion in the first instance persuaded the Jewish elders to plead for him with the Saviour. Matthew, by his warning, humbled Jewish pride. Luke, by his addition, sought to suppress Gentile conceit.

Luke tells us that the miracle was performed as Jesus came into Capernaum, and he gives us a closer glimpse of its details and circumstances.

Matthew's account reports the centurion as going to Jesus in person and relates the whole conversation as taking place between the Lord and himself.

Luke, with more circumstantial evidence, tells us that the centurion first of all employed his Jewish friends to intercede on his behalf. Matthew's more abbreviated record of the miracle relates what passed through others as if it had been directly transacted.

Matthew describes the centurion's servant malady as "palsy" and says that he was "grievously tormented," which implies

a special kind of paralysis accompanied with excruciating pain.

Luke, tells us that the servant was "sick and ready to die." His medical approach forbade him expressing the precise nature of the man's fatal ailment.

The centurion himself was a courtier or commander of a hundred soldiers (Acts 21: 31). Judaism had made a deep impression upon his Gentile mind. In it, Ellicott reminds us, he found "a purity, reverence, simplicity, nobleness of life not found in any heathen religion." He loved the Jewish people and rebuilt, at his own expense, one of their synagogues in the town where he was stationed. He also knew all about Jesus as a Teacher endowed with supernatural power. The Jews around him knew his worth and were ready to support his prayers and efforts on behalf of his dying servant. In this centurion we have a promise of the breakdown of the barrier between Jew and Gentile—a forecast of the spiritual brotherhood in Christ. This sincere soul was not far from the kingdom He was "a proselyte at the gate." Another centurion at the cross recognized the claims of Christ, and still another centurion was the first to be received into the Christian Church (Acts 10). There are at least four distinguishable traits in the character of the centurion which Matthew and Luke describe.

(1) There is his care and concern for his servant.

The word Luke used for "servant" is slave, yet he was not treated as a common, paltry, human chattle. He was more of a son than a slave. Luke also adds that this servant was dear or precious to his master. Although there was a bond of affection between the two, the dearness was of value, rather than of love. It was most unusual for wealthy Romans to deal thus with their slaves. Bishop Hall once wrote:

Great variety of suitors resorted to Christ. One comes for his son, another for a daughter, a third for himself. I see none came for his servant, but this one centurion. Neither was he a better man than a master. His servant is sick, yet he doth not drive him out-of-doors, but lays him at home; neither doth he stand gazing at his bedside, but seeks forth, and he seeks

forth not to witches and charmers, but to Christ. . . . Had the master been sick, the faithfulest servant could have done no more. He is unworthy to be well served that will not sometimes wait upon his followers.

The suffering of the valued servant touched the master's heart with pity. The centurion blended affection with authority. Accustomed to command, he was yet capable of concern for his sick slave.

(2) Another worthy trait of the centurion is his modesty and reticence in reckoning himself unworthy as a Gentile to approach Jesus, a Jew, whether personally or through the intercession of others. Luke expresses this humility more strongly than Matthew. This was no false humility. How proud some are of their humility! How offensive is a humility which is itself an affectation! Augustine's comment is fitting at this point. "He counted himself unworthy that Christ should enter his doors, he was counted worthy that Christ should enter his heart." The Lord has respect toward the humble. "The sense of unworthiness implied at once the consciousness of his own sins," says Ellicott, "and the recognition of the surpassing holiness and the

majesty of the Teacher he addressed."
(3) Then there was faith in Christ's

ability to heal.

"Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." What a conspicuous proof of the centurion's faith is here revealed! He knew there was no need of any magic influences operating by touch or charm. He did not ask, as Gideon did, for a sign of divine ability to perform a miracle. He did not ask for Jesus to come to his home, visit the sick servant, offer a prayer, and take him up by the hand. He felt that distance was nothing to Jesus, that His word at a mile's distance could cure as well as His actual presence and touch. His was a grand faith, desiring no visible sign. His spiritual eye could see the invisible and so his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. As Spurgeon expresses it, "The centurion's unstaggering faith required no clutch," and as we shall see, the Lord sent His word and healed the servant.

Further, it was this confidence in the efficacy of Christ's word to heal the dying man when He was personally absent that excited our Lord's commendation. Here was a man of authority believing that diseases had to obey Christ's bidding just as he had to obey his superior officers and those who were under him had to obey him. The uppermost idea in the centurion's mind was his profession, which supplied him with a conception of the grandeur of Him who is "the Autocrat of heaven and earth, the true Imperator, of whose authority Caesar was but an imperfect and poor shadow," as Cumming puts it. As a man of authority and under authority, personal presence was not necessary, for he could so delegate his soldiers or slaves to carry out his orders. So he argued that Christ, because of His sovereignty, could exercice His will through His word and that that would be sufficient.

(4) Last of all, there was the gracious

reward of his great faith.

As soon as Christ heard of the plight of the slave and beheld the humility of the centurion, He said, "I will come and heal him." As He went on His errand of mercy, someone ran on in front to tell the centurion that his request was granted. "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." Describing the cure, Luke says that the servant was made whole-a characteristic use of a technical medical term for a healthy condition, or to be "in sound health." There was no slow abatement of the violence of the servant's disease, but a sudden departure of it altogether. As soon as the centurion believed and Christ uttered His all-commanding word, complete healing was experienced. "The healing word flowed from Jesus as naturally as the perfume from the flowers."

Such an instantaneous cure wrought on the patient from a distance is rare among the healing miracles of the Bible. This cure by remote control, or "distant healing" (see Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30), baffles scientific psychologists who try to adduce parallels from modern orthodox psychotherapy. Fake faith healers seek to practice the healing of sickness by remote control through anointed handkerchiefs and other prayed-over (?) media.

In conclusion, Christ's commendation of the centurion's faith is worthy of a paragraph. That He should marvel at the magnitude of his faith is an evidence of His human consciousness. The act of faith which Jesus called "great" was so because the man asked for no sign but believed in Christ's conscious, supernatural ability and asked for nothing more. There are two instances of faith which were called "great faith" by Jesus, and both of those manifesting such faith were Gentiles-namely, the Roman centurion and the Syrophoenician woman (Matthew 15:28; Luke 4:26). The first begged for his servant-the second for her daughter. The miracle in both cases shows how the principle of faith is supreme over all privileges of race and birth. Laidlaw elaborates on the greatness of the faith Jesus so signally praised in these ways:

(1) It was great when we consider the man in whom it was found. As a Gentile, he had no claim in his own right to the mercy of Jesus. This Roman soldier was the

morning star of western faith.

(2) It was great in its view of Christ's power. It was a faith that put the crown of the universe on His head and the scepter

of universal dominion in His hand.

(3) It was great in its sole dependence upon Christ and His will. No personal contact nor external means were required. This man's faith was above all restrictions; it made nothing of difficulty or distance. By a silent act of His will, the cure was wrought.

(4) It was great in its self-forgetting humbleness. There was no vestige of desire for honor to himself, for consideration of his standing, in the way the centurion proferred his request. This is faith's true mark—"None but Christ."

Notes

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