

DO YOU KNOW



THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE?

The cover image for this booklet portrays three individuals—who, like some of the early disciples of Jesus Christ—were fishermen at the Sea of Galilee. Men such as these, along with others chosen by Jesus, followed Jesus for the next three-and-one-half years. They got to know Him intimately, and a record of their experiences has been left as a witness for us to also learn about and come to truly know Jesus Christ.

This booklet is a free educational service, provided by the “Church of the Eternal God” in the United States of America, in collaboration with the “Church of God, a Christian Fellowship” in Canada and the “Global Church of God” in the United Kingdom. Printed in the USA 2015. This booklet is not to be sold.

Scriptures in the booklet are quoted from the New King James version ((c)1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc. Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

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Conclusion

Jesus Christ *is* God! There was never a time when He did not exist as the Son of God, the second member of the God Family. God the Father created EVERYTHING through Jesus Christ.

Jesus became a Man, fully Man! He was not fully God at the same time! He set aside His divinity to come into sinful flesh, to overcome sin in the flesh and to die for us, so that we can inherit eternal life.

God the Father resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead as an immortal eternal God Being and restored to Him the glory, which He had before the world was.

While He was here on earth as a human being, He lived His life as an example for us, showing us how to live as true Christians in whom God's Spirit dwells. Christ is coming today in the flesh...living His life in His true disciples. The question is: *Are we willing* to let Him live His life in us?

pertinent questions:

Do we have the same purposes in life that Jesus had?

Are we willing to give our life for others, to help others and to sacrifice our time and preferences for others?

Are we willing to allow Christ to live in us so that we can overcome sin in the flesh?

Are we willing to do the Will of the Father and to fulfill His Law in our lives?

Are we willing to reveal the Father to others through our good works?

Are we willing to comfort those who mourn?

Are we willing to help in preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness?

Are we willing to always tell the truth; never to compromise; and to place the Word of God above all human relationships?

Are we willing to rejoice when someone repents?

If all of this applies to us, then we are Christ's disciples indeed!

Introduction

Jesus Christ is a great enigma for most people—who He was when He lived here on earth over 2,000 years ago; whether He lives today; and whether He will indeed return to this earth as He has promised.

Our free booklets *Jesus Christ—A Great Mystery!* and *When and How Will Christ Return?* address many of those questions.

But there is so much more to reveal, and in this booklet we focus primarily on *Christ's pre-existence, His birth, and His life on earth as a human being.*

Did He really exist prior to His human birth? If so, who or what was He? Was He an angel? Was He God? Was He just a “thought” in the mind of God?

HOW *exactly* did His human birth occur?

Was He a man with a sinful human nature?

Does the Old Testament, especially Isaiah 53, prophesy that the Messiah would first come to earth as God's suffering Servant? If so, why do most Jews reject those passages, claiming instead that the Messiah would ONLY come as the world-ruling King of Israel?

Why did Jesus come in the first place? What were the *purposes* of His Coming?

What kind of life did Jesus live? Was He a hippie-like, homeless vagabond with long hair? Did He have emotions and feelings? Did He resort to violence? Did He condone and justify sinful conduct? Did He really prohibit a disciple from burying his father? Was He married? Did He have brothers and sisters, and if so, why did He ask His disciple John to take care of His mother Mary?

As Christians, we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. This booklet will help you better understand who and what Jesus Christ was, and how He really lived as a human being, so that *YOU CAN* follow in His footsteps.

captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; *To comfort all who mourn*, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...

TO DO THE WILL OF THE FATHER

John 6:38 reads: *"I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me..."*

He continues to explain that it is the Will of the Father to resurrect all those whom the Father has drawn to Christ.

Hebrews 10:7 adds: *"Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'"*

Paul continues to explain that it was the Will of the Father to abolish animal sacrifices through the supreme Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

All of this includes the fact that Jesus came to give us an example as to how we must live. He told us that as He overcame, so we must overcome (Revelation 3:21); and as He kept the commandments, so we must keep them (John 15:10). In addition, He gave us an example of suffering so that we can follow His footsteps and remain sinless, even when we suffer in trials and persecutions (1 Peter 2:21).

He made it very clear that we must do the Will of both the Father and Christ if we want to enter the Kingdom of God, and that our refusal to keep the Law will disqualify us from inheriting eternal life (Matthew 7:23).

TO REVEAL THE FATHER

1 John 5:20 states: *"... the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ..."*

That Christ came to reveal the Father to us can also be seen in passages such as Matthew 11:25–27; and John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46.

This revelation includes the understanding that God is a Family—the Kingdom of God—into which we can be born.

QUESTIONS FOR US

To conclude this chapter, let us ask ourselves the following

(Galatians 1:9–16). And it is the gospel of the Kingdom, which must be preached again today in all the world as a witness (Matthew 24:14).

TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

John 18:37 cites Jesus in this way: “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.”

Jesus said these words when Pilate asked Him whether He was a king, clarifying that He was a king indeed, but that His kingdom was not of this world or this day and age (verse 36). Rather, He emphasized that He is and will be the King of the world tomorrow.

TO SAVE AND PRESERVE LIFE

Luke 9:56 reads: “For the Son of Man *did* not *come* to destroy men’s lives but to *save* them...”

Christ said these words to James and John, the “Sons of Thunder,” who were willing to destroy a city of the Samaritans because they had refused to grant them shelter.

TO BRING US MORE ABUNDANT LIFE

John 10:10 says: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. *I have come* that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

This includes enjoying what life may have to offer. Jesus came to eat and to drink, but He was accused by some who thought that He had to live an ascetic lifestyle.

Luke 7:34 says: “The Son of Man *has come* eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’”

We can also apply this principle to those who prohibit the (modest) consumption of alcohol or of clean meat, which we can eat (1 Timothy 4:3)

TO COMFORT THOSE WHO MOURN

Isaiah 61:1–2 says: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; *He has sent Me* to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the

Chapter 1

The Pre-Existence of Jesus

The question as to whether Jesus existed prior to His human birth is asked time and again. We will show you in this booklet the very clear Bible teaching that Jesus Christ did exist, AS GOD, prior to His First Coming!

GOD SINCE ETERNITY

The Bible reveals that both the Father and Jesus Christ ARE God, and that they have ALWAYS been God throughout eternity! Reading from John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word [the “*Logos*” in Greek, meaning “Spokesman”], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We see that it is Jesus Christ—the “Word”—the One who “SPOKE, and it was done” (Psalm 33:9), and the One who later became flesh (John 1:14), who is referred to in John 1:1 as “God.”

Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible states the following:

“What he [John] saith of him [is] enough to prove beyond contradiction that he is God. He asserts... His existence in the beginning: In the beginning was the Word. This bespeaks his existence, not only before his incarnation, but before all time. The beginning of time, in which all creatures were produced and brought into being, found this eternal Word in being. The world was from the beginning, but the Word was in the beginning... the Word was God: a distinct person... for he was with God [the Father]... He that undertook to bring us to God... was himself from eternity with God; so that this grand affair of man’s reconciliation to God was concerted between the Father and Son from eternity, and they understand one another perfectly well in it... He was with God, and therefore is said to come forth from the Father.”

In addition, Philippians 2:5–7 explains that Christ was in the “form of God” and “equal with God” the Father, but that He took the “form of a bondservant,” and came “in the likeness of men.”

Christ said in John 5:37 that no one has ever seen the “form” of God the Father (compare also John 1:18; 1 John 4:12). Since some, including Moses, saw the “form” of the LORD (Numbers 12:8; Exodus 33:17–23), it is logical and compelling that they must have seen the form of Christ—the second member in the Godhead.

Paul explains in 1 Timothy 3:16: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: GOD was manifest in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.”

HOW, exactly, was “God” manifest in the flesh? Some claim that God is just one Being and that He somehow placed some of His thoughts into the mind of a human being called Jesus. But they are wrong! **Jesus actually did exist as a God Being**—a second, individual God Being to God the Father—prior to His birth as a human.

CHRIST THE CREATOR

Colossians 1:16 states that “all things”—visible and invisible—were created “by” and “through” Jesus Christ. We see in John 1:1–3 that “all things” were made through the Word—the Logos—Jesus Christ; and Hebrews 1:1–2; 2:10 tells us that God the Father made “the worlds” or the entire universe and “all things” “through” Jesus Christ.

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible points out, regarding Colossians 1:16:

“Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe; of all things visible and invisible; of all things that had a beginning, whether they exist in time or in eternity... he was prior to all creation, to all beings, whether in the visible or invisible world... Now, allowing... Paul to have understood the terms which he used, he must have considered Jesus Christ as being truly and properly God... Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things, therefore Jesus Christ must be, according to the plain construction of the apostle’s words, truly and properly God.”

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible comments on John 1:3:

“In this place it is affirmed that ‘creation’ was effected by ‘the Word,’ or the Son of God. In [Genesis 1:1], it is said that the Being who created the heavens and the earth was God. In [Psalm 102:25–28], this work is ascribed to Yahweh. The ‘Word,’ or the Son of God, is therefore appropriately called ‘God’... he was the agent, or the efficient cause, by

He continued to explain that God’s Word—the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17)—will bring division between those who want to obey God’s Word and those who refuse to do so.

TO BRING JUDGMENT

Jesus came for judgment so that those who are blind may see, and that those who see may be made blind.

John 9:39 explains it in this way:

“And Jesus said, ‘For judgment *I have come* into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.’”

He proceeded to tell the Pharisees that their sin remained because they claimed that they saw; if they had been blind, they “would have no sin.”

Those who saw did not want to repent, so their sin remained; regarding those who were blind, God originally overlooked their ignorance (Acts 3:17–19; 17:30).

TO GIVE US SALVATION AND AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE

Hebrews 9:11–15, 27–28 states:

“But *Christ came* as High Priest of the good things to come... having obtained eternal redemption... He is the Mediator of the new covenant... that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance ... Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many...”

This includes His purpose of coming to build the Church of God—His spiritual Body (Colossians 1:18). He explains in Matthew 16:18: “And I also say to you that you are Peter (a small stone), and on this rock (Jesus Christ, the massive rock) I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

Mark 1:38 quotes Jesus as follows: “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because *for this purpose* I have come forth.”

Luke 4:43 adds: “I must *preach the kingdom of God* to the other cities also, because *for this purpose* I have been sent.”

(Compare Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:14–15).

There is only one gospel—the gospel of the Kingdom of God

is of God (1 John 4:2). That understanding includes the realization that He died and that He was really dead (Revelation 1:17–18); and that the Father resurrected Him from the dead (Romans 10:9; 6:4).

Also, the one is a deceiver who denies Christ as coming in the flesh today; that is, he denies that Christ lives in us today, so that His righteousness can be fulfilled in us (Galatians 2:20; 2 John 7; Romans 8:4).

TO FULFILL THE LAW

Matthew 5:17 reads: "... *I did not come* to destroy [the Law or the Prophets] but *to fulfill*..."

He came to exalt the law and make it honorable, as we read in Isaiah 42:21. He "fulfilled" the law or the Prophets by filling up the literal words with the spiritual intent, exclaiming for example that one transgresses the law not only by killing someone, but even by hating someone.

TO CALL SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

Matthew 9:13 says:

"... *I did not come to call* the [self-] righteous, but *sinner*s, *to repentance*" (compare Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).

This includes the fact that Jesus came to seek and save "the lost":

Luke 19:10 states: "...the Son of Man *has come to seek and to save* that which was lost" (compare Hebrews 12:2 and Luke 15:7).

TO SAVE US FROM DARKNESS

John 12:46 reads: "*I have come* as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness."

This world is in utter darkness. It is ruled by Satan the devil, the prince of darkness. Christ came to free us from darkness and lead us to the Light (Acts 26:17–18). This includes the fact that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 3:8 says: "... *For this purpose* the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

TO BRING THE SWORD

Matthew 10:34–39 reads: "Do not think that *I came* to bring peace on earth. I did not come *to bring* peace but *a sword*."

which the universe was made. There is no higher proof of omnipotence than the work of creation; and, hence, God often appeals to that work to prove that he is the true God, in opposition to idols... The Being, therefore, that 'created' all things must be divine; and, since this work is ascribed to Jesus Christ, and as it is uniformly in the Scriptures declared to be the work of God, Jesus Christ is therefore equal with the Father."

CHRIST—THE "I AM"

Jesus Christ spoke of His own pre-existence over and over again. At one time, He stated boldly that He—AS God—had lived before Abraham. The Jews were so outraged that they were willing to stone Jesus. Notice the dialogue and the reaction of the Jews to Christ's words in John 8:56–58: "[Jesus said,] 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.' Then the Jews said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.'"

When Jesus said, "I AM," rather than, "I WAS," the Jews understood that He identified Himself as God—as "Yahweh," the "I AM" or Eternal of the Old Testament. That is why they "took up stones to throw at Him" (verse 59).

The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* commentary adds the following thoughts:

"'Before Abraham was, I am' — The words rendered 'was' and 'am' are quite different. The one clause means, 'Abraham was brought into being'; the other, 'I exist.' The statement therefore is not that Christ came into existence before Abraham did... but that He never came into being at all, but existed before Abraham had a being; in other words, existed before creation, or eternally... In that sense the Jews plainly understood Him, since 'then took they up stones to cast at Him,' just as they had before done when they saw that He made Himself equal with God [John 5:18]."

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible elaborates:

"'I am' – The expression I am, though in the present tense, is clearly designed to refer to a past time... he assumes it as his name, 'I AM,' and 'I AM that I AM,' [Exodus 3:14]... There is a remarkable similarity between the expression employed by Jesus in this place and that used in Exodus to denote the name of God... The question here was about

his pre-existence. The objection of the Jews was that he was not 50 years old, and could not, therefore, have seen Abraham. Jesus replied to that that he existed before Abraham... this declaration corresponds to the affirmation of John [John 1:1], that he was in the beginning with God, and was God."

The Jews of Christ's time rejected Him as fulfilling the office of Messiah and the King of Israel. However, prophecy in the books of the Old Testament pointed to the fact that it would be God who would come to deliver them (compare Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23). Jesus told the Jews, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). In another instance, following His resurrection, Jesus showed some of His disciples these very proofs: "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

In addition, in Luke 10:18, Jesus said that He saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, claiming that He existed when Satan's rebellion occurred, which happened long before the creation of man. (See our free booklet, *Heavens and Earth... Before and After the First Man.*)

CHRIST—THE BEGINNER OF CREATION

Quoting from our free booklet, *God Is a Family*:

"Jesus Christ is identified, in Revelation 3:14, as the 'beginner of the creation of God,' as it should be correctly rendered... Christ... had no beginning. He is identified in Hebrews 7:1 as 'Melchizedek,' the 'priest of the Most High God.' Hebrews 7:3 explains that He had 'neither beginning of days nor end of life.' Therefore, Revelation 3:14 is more accurately translated as 'beginning' or 'source' of God's creation (compare, for instance, *Revised Standard Version*; *New Revised Standard Version*; *Revised English Bible*; and *New American Bible*). Christ EXISTED as a God being from all eternity, and it was He—the second member of the God Family—who began the creation of everything..."

Some, in commenting on Revelation 3:14, claim that God the Father first created His Son, Jesus Christ, and proceeded afterwards to create everything else through Christ. They say that the Word was created, and when that happened, there were no days or time created, so Christ had no beginning of days as such. This is not, however, what the Bible teaches.

Chapter 18

The Purposes of Jesus' Coming

In the concluding chapter of this booklet, we will answer from the Bible the question as to WHY Christ came to this earth as a human being. Some of the purposes and reasons are well known; others might not be that obvious.

TO DIE FOR US

In John 12:27, He prayed: "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But *for this purpose* I came to this hour."

In verses 32–33, it is explained that He was speaking of the manner of His death.

His purpose to die for us also includes His purpose to live again in a glorified state, enabling Him to give us His Holy Spirit (compare John 7:37–39). In order to obtain the Holy Spirit, one must repent of one's sins and believe and become baptized (Acts 2:38). Jesus gave us an example of correct baptism, even though He did not have to repent, as He never sinned: He asked John the Baptist to baptize Him to *show us* what *we* must do. Believing in Jesus and in His Sacrifice is not enough for the receipt of the Holy Spirit if we are at the same time unwilling to obey Him (Acts 5:32).

The purpose for Christ's coming (to die for us) includes also the fact that He came to *serve* us. We read in Matthew 20:28: "... just as the Son of Man *did not come* to be served, but *to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*" (compare Mark 10:45).

TO OVERCOME SIN IN THE FLESH

Romans 8:3 says: "... God did *by sending His own Son*... He condemned sin in the flesh..."

The one who confesses that Jesus came in the flesh (John 1:14)

Bethany to do the same four days later. Christ accepted this service in every case. He forgave the sinner because of her living faith; and He defended Mary's and the unidentified woman's conduct, saying that they had done it for His burial and that they will be remembered wherever the gospel is preached.

Let us carefully review what exactly Christ said about the women:

In Luke 7:47–50, Christ spoke these words about and to the “sinner”: “... her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much... your sins are forgiven... Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Since we cannot have forgiveness without repentance and the faith in Christ's Sacrifice, it appears that somehow, this woman must have known that Christ came as the Savior of the world, and that He would die for the world and for her.

In John 12:7, we read Christ's words to Judas regarding Mary; “Let her alone; she has kept this [costly oil] for the day of My burial.”

Mary must have believed that Christ would die for her and all of mankind, and her action manifested her belief in Christ's death.

In Matthew 26:10, 12–13, Christ said to His disciples, on behalf of the unidentified woman who anointed Him four days later:

“Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me... For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

In Mark 14:8, His words are virtually identical with His saying in Matthew, except that these interesting comments are added: “She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial.”

Again, we see that this woman, following Mary's example four days earlier, must have understood about Christ's death, and she also manifested her belief by her work.

The conduct of all of the women is a beautiful example of living faith in action. As James said, faith without works is dead (James 2:20). When we truly believe, we will prove our faith by how we live.

Micah 5:2 talks about the coming Messiah when it states: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, WHOSE GOINGS FORTH ARE FROM OF OLD, FROM EVERLASTING.”

The *New Bible Commentary: Revised* adds the following: “... the title ‘the beginning of God's creation’ (better translated ‘the principle’ or ‘source’ of creation) exalts Christ as Creator above the proud but puny creatures that boast in their self-sufficiency.”

The Commentary of *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* agrees, pointing out: “...beginning of the creation of God’—not he whom God created first, but as in Colossians 1:15–18... the Beginner of all creation, its originating instrument. All creation would not be represented adoring Him, if He were but one of themselves. He being the Creator is a strong guarantee for His faithfulness as ‘the Witness and Amen.’”

In Revelation 22:13, Christ refers to himself as the “beginning [arche] and the end [telos].” If “beginning” suggests that there was a time when Christ did not exist, but that He came into existence as the first being of God's creation, does “end” indicate that there will be a point at which He will no longer exist? That would be a ridiculous suggestion!

Based on all the biblical evidence, we can dogmatically state that Jesus Christ had NO beginning. Rather, He is the BEGINNER of God's creation: God the Father created everything through Jesus Christ, who existed [as God] since all eternity.

Finally, quoting again from our booklet, *God Is a Family*:

“We read that the Spirit of Christ was IN the prophets of old (1 Peter 1:11)... This proves, too, that Christ existed at that time [as God], prior to His human existence, and that He gave His Spirit to the prophets...”

There can be no reasonable and honest doubt that Jesus Christ was God—since all eternity—before He became a human being.

“[The] woman [sinner] in the city [was not] Mary Magdalene, spoken of in Luke 8:2 under another character; and is a different person, who had not been taken notice of by the evangelist before; nor Mary the sister of Lazarus, who is said to anoint the feet of Christ, and wipe them with her hair, John 12:3... this was in Galilee, and that in Bethany; this in the house of Simon the Pharisee, that in the house of Lazarus; this was some time before Christ’s death, and after this he went a circuit through every city and village, that was but six days before his death, and after which he never went from those parts;

“nor is this account the same with the history, recorded in Matthew 26:6 for that fact was done in Bethany also, this in Galilee; that in the house of Simon the leper, this in the house of Simon the Pharisee; that was but two days before the death of Christ, this a considerable time before; the ointment that woman poured, was poured upon his head, this upon his feet: who this woman was, is not certain, nor in what city she dwelt; it seems to be the same in which the Pharisee’s house was; and was no doubt one of the cities of Galilee, as Nain, Capernaum, or some other at no great distance from these:

“which was a sinner; a notorious sinner, one that was known by all to have been a person of a wicked life and conversation; a lewd woman, a vile prostitute, an harlot... the word, sinners, seems to be used elsewhere by Luke; see Luke 15:1 compared with Matthew 21:31. Some think she was a Gentile, Gentiles being reckoned by the Jews sinners, and the worst of sinners; but this does not appear [to be the case]...”

While the woman in Luke’s account was a well-known sinner, the woman in John’s account was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, who was a very dedicated servant of Christ; and the woman in Matthew’s and Mark’s account is not identified—but it is unlikely that it was again Mary, anointing Christ a second time.

SINNER SERVES AS EXAMPLE

What we need to conclude from this is that the well-known sinner in the city of or near Capernaum, who was the first one anointing Christ, served as a motivation for Mary to do something similar. While the prostitute anointed Christ’s feet, Mary anointed His head. And Mary’s example motivated and inspired another woman in the same city of

Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Christ had resurrected. A supper was made for Jesus, and Lazarus, Martha and Mary were all there. We read that Martha served, as she had done before; so the implication is that the supper took place in the house of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. We read that Mary took a pound of very costly oil, anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. When Judas Iscariot complained about the “waste of money,” Jesus responded that Mary had kept the oil for His burial.

Many seem to think that this incident is the same as the one described by Matthew and Mark. However, this is not the case either.

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

In Matthew 26:6–13, we also read about a woman (she is not identified as Mary) who poured very costly fragrant oil on Christ’s head, and that His disciples (not just Judas) became indignant, claiming that the oil could have been sold and the money been given to the poor. Jesus responded that in pouring the oil on His body, the woman did it for His burial, and that her action will be told as a memorial to her. Even though this account is similar to the one in John, we read in Matthew 26:2 that it took place “two days” before Passover (not six days, as in John 12:1), and that it took place in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. Neither Lazarus nor Mary nor Martha are mentioned in this record.

Mark 14:3–9 describes the same incident, as reported by Matthew. Mark 14:1 tells us as well that it occurred two days before Passover, and verse 3 states that it took place in Bethany, at the house of Simon the leper. The unidentified woman poured very costly oil on Christ’s head, and some became indignant over the “waste of money.” Christ’s response was the same as it was recorded in Matthew’s account.

We see, then, that the gospel writers tell us about at least three episodes, when women anointed Jesus’ feet or head.

THREE EPISODES

Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible states the following about the account of Luke, regarding the first episode, when a sinner anointed Christ, explaining that the accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John describe events on at least three different occasions:

Chapter 2

Jesus Christ IS God!

The Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus Christ is God. For undeniable proof, notice Titus 2:11–14: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

CHRIST—THE GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR

The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* commentary confirms that the entire phrase “Great God and Savior” refers to Jesus Christ:

“There is but one Greek article to ‘God’ and ‘Savior,’ which shows that both are predicated of one and the same Being... Also... ‘appearing’ (*epiphaneia*) is never by Paul predicated of God the Father... it is invariably applied to Christ’s coming... Also... in the context... there is no reference to the Father, but to Christ alone... Also... the expression ‘great God,’ as applied to Christ, is in accordance with the context, which refers to the glory of His appearing...”

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible adds:

“There can be little doubt, if any, that by ‘the great God’ here, the apostle referred to the Lord Jesus, for it is not a doctrine of the New Testament that God himself as such... will appear at the last day.”

This is true. The Bible says that God the Father will descend to earth AFTER the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment—not at the time of Christ’s Second Coming.

NO ONE HAS SEEN THE FATHER

In addition, we make these comments in our free booklet, *God Is a Family*:

“John 1:18 tells us: ‘No one has ever seen God [the Father]. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known’ (*New Revised Standard Version*). Notice the rendering of this passage in the *New American Bible*: ‘No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed him.’”

A similar rendering is also used in the *Luther Bible*: “No one has seen God at any time; the only Begotten, WHO IS GOD and who is in the Father’s bosom, has revealed Him to us.” The *Elberfelder Bible* comments in an annotation that many old and good sources render the phrase, “the only-begotten Son,” as “the only-begotten GOD.”

John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible adds: “The Syriac version here renders it, ‘the only begotten, God which is in the bosom of the Father’; clearly showing, that he is the only begotten, as he is God.”

THE ETERNALLY BLESSED GOD

Additionally, Romans 9:5 refers to Jesus Christ as “the eternally blessed God.” Please note the exact rendering: “... Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible states the following:

“‘Who is over all’ – This is an appellation that belongs only to the true God. It implies supreme divinity; and is full proof that the Messiah is divine: Much effort has been made to show that this is not the true rendering, but without success. There are no various readings in the Greek manuscripts of any consequence; and the connection here evidently requires us to understand this... of the divine nature.

“‘God blessed forever’ – This is evidently applied to the Lord Jesus; and it proves that he is divine.”

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible agrees:

“As this verse contains such an eminent proof of the deity of Christ, no wonder that the opposers of his divinity should strive with their utmost skill and cunning to destroy its force. And it must be truly painful to a mind that has nothing in view but truth, to see the mean and hypocritical methods used to elude the force of this text. Few have met it in that honest and manly way in which Dr. Taylor, who was a conscientious Arian, has considered the subject. ‘Christ,’ says he, ‘is God over all, as he is by the Father appointed Lord, King, and Governor of all.’”

Chapter 17

The Anointing of Jesus

The question has been raised as to whether all of the passages in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John regarding the anointing of Jesus address the same incident. The answer is that they do not, and this understanding is most remarkable in light of the good influence we may have on others, as well as the good example we can be setting for those who may observe our conduct.

Luke’s account of Christ’s anointing occurred prior to the events described by the other gospel writers; they did not take place in the same city; and the women anointing Christ were not the same.

THE SINNER

We read in Luke 7:36–50 that Christ went to the house of Simon, a Pharisee, to eat with him, when a “woman in the city who was a sinner” washed Christ’s feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed His feet and anointed them with fragrant oil which she had brought. The Pharisee questioned that Christ was a prophet, since He allowed the woman to do this, even though she was a sinner. He reasoned that if Christ had known who the woman was, He would not have permitted her to touch Him. However, Christ said that the sins of the woman, which were many, were forgiven her, because she loved much, and He told her that her faith had saved her.

It appears from verses 1 and 11 that this episode took place in the city of Capernaum or Nain or another city nearby. The city itself where the woman lived is not identified, but many think that it was Capernaum.

MARY, SISTER OF LAZARUS

However, when turning to John 12:1–8, we find ANOTHER anointing of Jesus described. It occurred six days before Passover (John 12:1), in

phrase; and Christ's meaning is, let such who are dead in trespasses and sins... bury those who are dead in a natural or corporal sense... there were enough of them to take care of this service: and therefore, there was no need why he should neglect the ministry of the Gospel to attend that..."

The *Ryrie Study Bible* elaborates on Christ's saying, as follows (commenting on Luke 9:59–60):

"The father had not died; the speaker meant that he was obligated to care for him until he died... [Christ replied:] let those who are spiritually dead bury those who die physically. The claims of the kingdom are paramount."

Christ tells us that the concern for an elderly parent who might or might not die soon must not prevent us from doing the Will of God for us. Even though it may appear that only we can and must deal with certain physical situations, upon deeper analysis, we might find that others, who are not called to God's Way of Life at this point, might be in a better position to do so, while God wants us—and especially those called into His ministry—to fulfill much more important tasks at this time.

Note, too, the following statements by *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*:

"Mentioning Christ, he interposes a very great word concerning him, that he is over all, God blessed for ever. Lest the Jews should think meanly of him, because he was of their alliance, he here speaks thus honourably concerning him: and it is a very full proof of the Godhead of Christ; he is not only over all, as Mediator, but he is God blessed for ever. Therefore, how much sorer punishment were they worthy of that rejected him!"

GOD ANOINTED GOD

In the first chapter of the book of Hebrews, overwhelming and indisputable proof can be found that Jesus Christ is God today. Beginning with verse 5, God the Father is quoted (compare verse 1) as saying: "(verse 5) For to which of the angels did He [God the Father] ever say... (Verse 7) And of the angels He [God the Father] says... (Verse 8) But to the Son He [God the Father] says: 'Your throne, O GOD, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.'"

So, clearly, God the Father, speaking to Jesus Christ the Son, calls Him "God."

Also notice how the next verse (verse 9) is rendered in some translations (still quoting God the Father's words to the Son, Jesus Christ). For instance, the *Revised English Bible* writes: "You have loved right and hated wrong; therefore, O God, your God has set you above your fellows (or: "... has anointed You")."

This rendering ("Therefore, O God, Your God has anointed You...") is also used in the *Luther Bible*; the *Zuercher Bible*; and the *Menge Bible*.

The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* commentary states the following: "Jerome, Augustine, and others translate [Psalm 45:7:] 'O God, Thy God, hath anointed thee,' whereby Christ is addressed as God. This is probably the true translation of the Hebrew there, and also of the Greek of Hebrews here; for it is likely the Son is addressed, 'O God,' as in [Hebrews 1:8]."

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible agrees, stating, "The original... may be thus translated: Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee. The form of speech is nearly the same with [sic] that in the preceding verse [of Hebrews 1:8]..."

Similarly *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible*:

"Therefore God, even thy God.' The word 'even' inserted here by the translators [in the *Authorized Version*], weakens the force of the expression. This might be translated, 'O God, thy God hath anointed thee'...

"The Greek will bear this construction, as well [as] the Hebrew in [Psalm 45:7] In the margin in [sic] the Psalm it is rendered 'O God.' This is the most natural construction, as it accords with what is just said before. 'Thy throne, O God, is forever. Thou art just and holy, therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee,' etc."

THE MIGHTY GOD

Also, in our free booklet, *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*, we make the following observation about Christ's divinity and His role in the future:

"The angel Gabriel quoted here [in Luke 1:30–35] in part from Isaiah 9:6–7: 'For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God...'"

So we see that Isaiah prophesied, under inspiration, that Jesus Christ would be called the "Mighty God," when He rules here on earth. In Isaiah 10:21, we read that a remnant of Jacob will return to the "Mighty God."

There is still much additional proof for the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ is God today. Christ is called the "image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:3–4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1–3). Thomas calls the resurrected Christ "My Lord and My God," and Christ responds that he believes now since he has seen Him (John 20:28–29). What did Thomas believe? That Christ was his Lord and his GOD.

1 John 5:20 is another text showing that Jesus Christ is God. It says: "And we know that the Son of God has come... and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

Some claim that the reference of "true God" refers here to the Father, but as *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible* points out, the grammatical construction of the sentence favors the view that the reference is to Christ. He continues to state:

"No doubt would have been ever entertained on this point, if it had not been for the reluctance to admit that the Lord Jesus is the

a category of people who receive the word but become unfruitful due to the "cares of this world" (Matthew 13:22).

The *Life Application Bible* adds this thought regarding Matthew 8:22: "As God's Son, Jesus did not hesitate to demand complete loyalty. Even family loyalty was not to take priority over the demands of obedience."

Nothing and no one must prevent us from following Christ and obeying His Word. As those called and chosen by God, we are God's Spirit-begotten children whose first and foremost responsibility is to love GOD with all of our heart, might and soul. Christ said that no one is "fit" for the Kingdom of God, who puts his hand to the plow and looks back (Luke 9:62)—wanting to return to where he came from.

Christ showed the difference to His disciple who wanted to wait until his father had died, before following Christ, by explaining that the spiritual dead can take care of his father, including his brothers and other family members who were apparently not being called at that time.

Christ was not saying, of course, that the father should not be buried when he died. He was talking about spiritually dead relatives who would be in a position to take care of the funeral arrangements. We were all, at one time, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), but God has made us "alive" in Jesus Christ (same verse), having forgiven us all of our trespasses (Colossians 2:13). For those who have been made spiritually alive, nothing must be more important than to follow Christ wherever He goes and wants His followers to go (Revelation 14:4).

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible gives the following explanation, when discussing the "dead" who can "bury their dead":

"Our Lord is not to be understood, as speaking against, or disrespectfully of burying the dead; his words suppose it ought to be done: only it was not proper, that this person should be concerned in it at this time, who was called to an higher employment; and therefore should leave this to be done by persons, whom it better became. And however strange and odd such a phrase may sound in the ears of some, of one dead man's burying another, it was easily understood by a Jew; with whom it is common to say... 'that a sinner is counted as... dead, and that ungodly persons, even while they are alive',... are 'called dead'... And in this sense is the word used, in the former part of this

be buried? Impossible. As it was the practice... to bury on the day of death, it is not very likely that this disciple would have been here at all if his father had just breathed his last; nor would the Lord, if He was there, have hindered him discharging the last duties of a son to a father. No doubt it was the common case of a son having a frail or aged father, not [supposed] to live long..."

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible agrees, stating (in regard to Luke 9:60):

"The excuse he made: 'Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. I have an aged father at home, who cannot live long, and will need me while he does live; let me go and attend on him until he is dead, and I have performed my last office of love to him, and then I will do any thing'... It is a plausible excuse indeed: 'Let me go and bury my father, – let me take care of my family, and provide for my children, and then I will think of serving Christ;' whereas the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof must be sought and minded in the first place... Not that Christ would have his followers or his ministers to be unnatural; our religion teaches us to be kind and good in every relation, to show piety at home, and to requite our parents. But we must not make these offices an excuse from our duty to God... This disciple was called to be a minister, and therefore must not entangle himself with the affairs of this world [2 Timothy 2:4]."

The Nelson Study Bible explains Matthew 8:21–22 as follows:

"This passage most likely describes a follower whose father was still alive, because by Levitical law the man would not be out in public if his father had just died. His father was aged. So the man wanted to go to his home, wait for his father to die, and then follow Christ. Jesus' answer means that we must never make excuses for refusing to follow Him. There is no better time than the present."

The same commentary makes the following comments to the parallel account in Luke 9:59–60:

"This aspiring disciple placed family responsibilities ahead of following Jesus. The concerns of home were this man's stumbling block... Jesus emphasized that a disciple must have clear priorities. The call of God should receive priority over everything else."

Christ is teaching us that we are not to allow physical concerns to prevent us from serving Him. In His parable of the sower, He addresses

true God. If the assertion had been that 'this is the true Messiah;' or that 'this is the Son of God;' or that 'this is he who was born of the Virgin Mary;' there would have been no difficulty in the construction."

Barnes also makes this additional convincing argument:

"... this interpretation accords with what we are sure John would affirm respecting the Lord Jesus Christ. Can there be any doubt that he who said, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;' that he who said, 'all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made;' that he who recorded the declaration of the Saviour, 'I and my Father are one;' and the declaration of Thomas, 'my Lord and my God,' would apply to him the appellation 'the true God!'...?"

The Bible is very dogmatic that Jesus Christ is God today! In fact, this is an essential and salvational issue!

Chapter 16

Let the Dead Bury the Dead!

Christ made the following, seemingly controversial statement in Matthew 8:19–22:

“Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, ‘Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.’... Then another of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’”

CALLED INTO THE MINISTRY

The phraseology, “Follow Me,” indicates a calling into the ministry (Matthew 4:19; 9:9; John 1:43).

The parallel passage in Luke 9:59–60 reveals more clearly that Christ was calling this man into the ministry, challenging Him to “Follow Me... [and to] go and preach the kingdom of God.”

Christ was not prohibiting this disciple from attending his father’s funeral. The passage does not say that his father had died and needed to be buried. We read in Luke 7:11–15 how Christ Himself showed kindness to a mother during a funeral procession of her only son.

What Christ was addressing here was the desire of His disciple to stay with his elderly father UNTIL he had died, rather than following Christ’s invitation to become a minister and preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God wherever he would be sent. This man tried to make excuses for not following the call to the ministry at that moment in time. He wanted to wait for a more “appropriate” time. As the early apostles forsook everything they had in order to follow Christ, so this disciple was challenged to do the same. But he refused.

FATHER HAD NOT DIED

The Commentary of *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* points out:

“Was his father actually dead – lying a corpse – having only to

law appointed the hands of the witnesses to be first upon the criminal, and afterwards the hands of all the people, so that if they fly off, and do not condemn her, the prosecution drops.”

DON'T CONTINUE SINNING

However, Christ admonished the woman not to continue sinning. Even though Christ did not claim “civil authority,” He nevertheless showed that He “regarded the action of which they accused her as sin” (*Barnes*), and He commanded her to cease from sinning—especially from the act of adultery.

If we apply Christ’s comments, that He was not “condemning” the person, in a spiritual sense, we have to conclude that Christ forgave the woman her sins. God forgives us upon true repentance (compare Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; 1 Kings 8:33–40). Christ, knowing our thoughts and hearts (compare Luke 5:22), could and would have seen that the woman before Him had deeply repented of her sin, and so Christ forgave her. We find, in similar instances, that Christ forgave sins upon repentance (compare Luke 7:36–50). At the same time, Christ cautioned the woman caught in the act of adultery, not to return to her former adulterous conduct (compare John 5:14).

Chapter 3

Jesus Christ—the Man!

We have discussed in the previous two chapters that Jesus Christ was God before He came to this earth, and that He is God today. From this it follows that He was and had to be God—the “Immanuel” or “God with us”—when He came to this earth during His First Coming. As we saw in the last chapter, He confirmed this fact to the Jews at His time, when He called Himself the “I am”—the Everlasting One—the God of the Old Testament.

But in what way was He God when He was here on earth? The fact that He was God since all eternity—with no beginning and uncreated—has confused many who think that He was still “fully God”—as well as “fully man”—when He came to this earth. Of course, one cannot be fully something and fully something else, if these two characteristics are incompatible. And indeed, being fully God and fully man would be inconsistent.

What then, was Jesus Christ, when He came to this earth?

GOD BECAME FLESH

We discuss this question in much detail in our free booklet, *Jesus Christ—a Great Mystery*. We recommend that you read the entire booklet, especially pages 7–22 for the purpose of this chapter. Because of space limitations, we can only quote here pertinent excerpts and highlights that summarize the biblical understanding as to who and what Jesus was when He was here on earth:

“Notice the clear revelation of this mystery in John 1:14: ‘And the Word [the ‘Word’ referring to Jesus Christ, Who in the beginning was God and was with God the Father, John 1:1–2] BECAME flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth’...

“God clearly tells us that the Word—Jesus Christ—who was God

before His human birth, BECAME flesh. Christ came in the flesh by BECOMING flesh. This means that He became totally and fully flesh and blood, like you and I! This is CRUCIAL for you to understand! When Christ BECAME flesh, He was no longer Spirit. He was no longer fully God, because He had become fully man!...

"When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, how did that happen? We read that the Holy Spirit of God, the Father, came upon her—that the power of God overshadowed her (Luke 1:35). From this we can understand that through the Holy Spirit, God, the Father, changed the all-powerful Spirit being, Jesus Christ, into a tiny physical human sperm, fertilizing the egg in the womb of Mary, thus impregnating her. The fetus grew within Mary's womb like any other human fetus. Jesus was born as a little baby like every other human baby. He was fully flesh, just like you and I are fully flesh..."

GOD EMPTIED HIMSELF

The Bible teaches clearly that Jesus Christ—the God of the Old Testament—"emptied" Himself and became a human being. We read in Philippians 2:6–7, in the *Revised Standard Version*:

"[Jesus Christ]... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped (better: retained), but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men..."

The *New International Version* renders the phrase in verse 7 as follows: "...taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness..."

The *New Jerusalem Bible* leaves no doubt in its translation as to what Jesus became:

"... he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being..."

In spite of these powerful words, most commentaries simply deny what is being said here, and resort to some incredible "explanation" as to what this passage allegedly means. Note these astonishing statements by the *Nelson Study Bible*:

"This phrase can be translated 'He emptied Himself.' Christ did this by taking on the form of a servant, a mere man. In doing this, He did not empty Himself of any part of His essence as God. Instead He gave

nobody can claim to be without sin (1 John 1:8). Therefore, Christians are not to participate, for instance as jurors, in the judicial systems of this world. In addition, the Church today is not to carry out the death penalty, either. Rather, the ministry is to preach today reconciliation and eternal life (2 Corinthians 5:18–21)."

OLD TESTAMENT LAW

Under Old Testament law, both the adulteress AND the adulterer had to be stoned (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22), if they had been convicted based on the accusations of at least two witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6). In addition, the witnesses had to cast the first stones (Deuteronomy 17:7). We can see from the foregoing that the situation before Christ did not even come close to such a "trial" and "conviction" and "sentencing," as required by the law.

First, even though the woman was allegedly caught in the very act of adultery, the accusers did not present the man. Secondly, when Christ challenged them by pointing out their hypocrisy, they all disappeared, and Christ and the woman were left without any accuser. No valid or legal judgment was pronounced by any competent judge, and even if it had been, the witnesses had disappeared so that the sentence could not have been carried out.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible states: "They had accused her, but they had not proceeded to the act expressive of judicial condemnation."

Based on all of these factors, Christ told the woman that He did not condemn her to death either. *Barnes* elaborates:

"This is evidently to be taken in the sense of judicial condemnation, or of passing sentence as a magistrate, for this was what they had arraigned her for. It was not to obtain his opinion about adultery, but to obtain the condemnation of the woman. As he claimed no civil authority, he said that he did not exercise it, and should not condemn her to die."

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible adds the following thoughts: "It would have been strange if Jesus, when he was not a magistrate, and had not the witnesses before him to examine them, and when she had not been tried and condemned by the law and legal judges, should have taken upon him to condemn her."

Compare also *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*: "The

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible points out:

"Had our Lord condemned the woman to death, they might have accused him to Pilate, as arrogating to himself the power of life and death, which the Romans had taken away from the Jews [compare John 18:31]; besides, the Roman laws did not condemn an adulteress to be put to death. On the other hand, if he had said she should not be put to death, they might have represented him to the people as one who decided contrary to the law, and favored the crime of which the woman was accused."

AFFAIRS OF THIS WORLD

We also need to keep in mind that Christ had not come in the flesh to condemn or destroy, but to save human life (compare Luke 9:56). It was simply not His purpose to get involved in the affairs of this world. For instance, He refused to become a judge or an arbitrator over those who fought over their inheritance (compare Luke 12:13–14).

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible points out:

"Christ came not into the world to act the part of a civil magistrate, and therefore refused to arbitrate a case, or be concerned in dividing an inheritance... Nor did he come into the world to condemn it, but that the world, through him, might be saved [John 3:17]..."

Christ expects this same kind of approach and conduct from His disciples today. He told Pilate that none of His servants would fight to prevent His murder—including His angels and His disciples—as His Kingdom was not (and still is not) of this world (John 18:36). That is one reason why Christ's disciples are opposed to joining the military or voting in governmental elections or serving on a jury.

Note that we as Christians, who live under the conditions of the New Covenant, are NOT to carry out or participate in any way in the execution of criminals. As we explain in our free booklet, *And Lawlessness Will Abound*:

"God gave Israel certain national laws, for instance in Deuteronomy 16 and 17, dealing with the punishment and, in certain cases, the execution of criminals. Converted Christians are servants of the New Covenant, which gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6). They are not to judge or condemn another person. Christ said that he who is without sin may cast the first stone (John 8:7). At the same time, we are told that

up His privileges as God and took upon Himself existence as a man. While remaining completely God, He became completely human."

This is utter nonsense. As mentioned, you cannot be completely something and be completely the exact opposite at the same time.

The Bible is very clear that Christ emptied Himself of existing as a Spirit Being, and He emptied Himself of the glory that He had before the world was (compare John 17:5). He BECAME a human being. He was no longer "completely" or "fully" God—rather, He had become "completely" or "fully" man.

We read, for instance, that man—flesh and blood—cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50). We also read that we must be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5), and that flesh and blood cannot even see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3). In order to be IN the Kingdom of God, one must BE Spirit (John 3:6). Jesus came in the flesh; He WAS flesh when He was here on earth. He became born again at the time of His resurrection as a Spirit Being—no longer flesh and blood—and it was THEN that He entered the Kingdom or Family of God as a glorified Spirit Being. He was NOT (yet) in the Kingdom of God when He was here on earth as a man. It is true that some of His disciples saw Him on the mount of transfiguration as a glorified Being in the Kingdom of God—together with a glorified Moses and a glorified Elijah—but that was in a vision, picturing what would occur in the future.

THE FATHER'S SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE

We continue quoting from our free booklet, *Jesus Christ—a Great Mystery*:

"Christ had God's Holy Spirit dwelling within Him... He had God's Spirit without measure or limit—given at conception—which is how He was able to overcome sin in the flesh... Jesus said that He could do nothing of Himself (John 5:19, 30). When in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed to God, the Father, for strength and God sent an angel to strengthen Him. He knew that the Father could do everything and that nothing was impossible for the Father (Luke 22:40–46; Matthew 26:39–42)..."

He healed the sick through the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 5:17; 6:19; 8:46)—not His power, but the power of the Father's Spirit in

Him. Christ said that of Himself, He could do nothing (John 5:19). It was the Spirit of God the Father dwelling in Christ without measure or limitation, which gave Him the power to perform miracles. Acts 10:38 reads: “God [the Father] anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God [the Father] was with Him.” We also read that God the Father was in Christ [through the Holy Spirit] during His suffering (2 Corinthians 5:19), giving Him the strength to endure.

FULLY MAN

To continue with our free booklet, *Jesus Christ—a Great Mystery*:

“It was absolutely NECESSARY for Christ to become FULLY MAN, because only in that way could He become the Savior of man. Notice this in 1 Corinthians 15:21: ‘For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.’... We read that Christ was DEAD. HE HIMSELF had died—the person that He was—the Son of God Who had become Man. Revelation 1:18 confirms that HE was dead, not just a part of Him...

“Philippians 2:8 adds that ‘He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of DEATH, even the death of the cross.’... Romans 14:9 adds: ‘For to this end Christ DIED and rose and LIVED AGAIN, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living’...

“Hebrews 2:9 teaches very powerfully that Christ died just as all humans die. In fact, He HAD to die that way in order to ‘...taste death for everyone.’ We read: ‘But 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.’

“The only way that Christ—who had been GOD since all eternity—could die, was to become flesh. When He became flesh, He was totally human!... When Christ became flesh, He gave up all of His divine attributes and powers. Simply put, He became a man so that He could die! He was no longer a Spirit being, He was no longer God as we think of God, since God, a Spirit being, cannot die (compare Luke 20:35–36; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 Timothy 1:17)...

“Christ became flesh so that He could overcome sin in the flesh. He had to prove that it is possible for man, with the help of God’s

Chapter 15

Stoning the Woman Caught in Adultery?

Why did Jesus refuse to stone the woman who had been caught in adultery? Did He thereby violate the Law of God?

John 8:3–11 reads, in context (emphasis added):

“Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, IN THE VERY ACT. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?’ This they said, TESTING HIM, THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING OF WHICH TO ACCUSE HIM. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first’ [better: ‘let Him throw THE first stone’]. And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, BEING CONVICTED BY THEIR CONSCIENCE, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’”

JESUS DID NOT DESTROY THE LAW

We need to understand that Jesus did NOT come to destroy the law (Matthew 5:17–20). He did not come to declare that the Ten Commandments were obsolete and that adultery was no longer a sin. At the same time, the passage in John 8 points out that the scribes and Pharisees came to test or tempt Him, so that they could accuse Him. In what way was this a test?

they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.”

In this instance, they defied the secular authorities so that they could do the Will of God and no punishment was forthcoming. Shortly thereafter, in order to follow God’s command, which had been communicated to them by an angel, they again had to disobey the secular authorities and were severely punished as a consequence (Acts 5:17–32, 40). But in spite of their punishment and the ongoing threats of the government, the apostles defied the order of the civil counsel, “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (verse 41). And they continued to disobey the orders of the government while obeying God’s explicit instructions (verse 42).

In short, our submission to governing authorities does not mean uncritical obedience, as our highest authority is God. Laws that are contrary to the law of God must not be obeyed, but in such situations we must be willing to accept the consequences of our actions and submit to the penalties inflicted upon us, without resorting to violent civil disobedience.

Holy Spirit within him, to overcome sin!...

“Christ was tempted in all points, as we are, but He stayed sinless (Hebrews 4:15, ‘[He] was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.’). He overcame sin in the flesh, resisting temptation (Revelation 3:21). God, a powerful perfect Spirit being—cannot be tempted (compare James 1:13). But we read that Christ WAS tempted. This proves that He was not the all-powerful perfect Spirit being when He was here on this earth that He HAD been prior to His birth as a human being...

“Romans 8:3 tells us: ‘For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh [human beings, all by themselves, without God’s Spirit dwelling in them, are too weak to keep the law], God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.’ In other words, He OVERCAME SIN as a human being.

“... why, then, do we read that Christ would be called ‘Immanuel,’ which means, ‘God with us’ (Matthew 1:23)?...

“Christ had been an immortal God being. He was changed into a human being, but He was still the same personage He had been since all eternity. Christ, who became human, was still the personage He had always been. He was still the one who had previously met with Abraham, the one who created Adam and Eve, and the one who spoke to Moses face-to-face. He lived as a human being—growing as children do, developing into a young man, and then becoming a rabbi, or teacher, in Judah. But He was still the same individual that He had always been. He had been an immortal God being and He knew that He would become an immortal God being again, subject to qualifying by being and remaining sinless... Christ, when He was here on earth, was, quite literally, Immanuel, or, ‘God with us.’...

“Christ was God Eternal, who BECAME man, so that man COULD ultimately become God! Christ was tempted, He suffered, and He died as a man.

“Who IS Christ now? Christ is God. Christ, the man, was resurrected by God, the Father, as the mighty and powerful God being that He had always been before His days in the flesh. He is now the mighty God for whom we wait to bring us redemption, salvation, and eternal life in the very Kingdom of God (Titus 2:11–14)!

And so we can see that Christ had the authority for His actions and He spoke with authority. We should also take note of the fact that Jesus drove out the money changers twice—at the beginning (John 2:13–17) and towards the end of His human ministry (Mark 11:15–18; Matthew 21:12–13).

VIOLENT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE?

But what about us? Does that give us the right to fight against the authorities today if we consider it necessary and feel that such action is justified?

In Romans 13, we see that we are to be subject to the powers that be, to man's laws, which is our commitment to an orderly society, as long as there is no conflict with the law of God. Verses 1 and 2 state that "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves."

As Jesus Himself taught, we are to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (compare Matthew 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–26), thus showing that He was subject to man's law so long as there was no conflict with God's law. And that applies to us today.

In Titus 3:1 Titus is instructed by Paul to "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work."

In 1 Peter 2:13–17, the same principle is repeated: "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men – as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

In Acts 4:18, Peter and John were "commanded... not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." But in verses 19–21 we read: "But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' So when

human authority, of course; as the Son of God, He represented God the Father who was the Owner of the Temple.

Did the authorities try and put a stop to this action that Jesus took? Even though the Jews asked for “signs” or “proof” that He was allowed to do this (John 2:18), they were afraid to stop Jesus because they knew that the law of God was on His side.

The *New Bible Commentary* observes that “He (Jesus) visits the Temple and finds that within the sacred enclosure in the court of the Gentiles a market has been established for the sale of animals required for the sacrifices. The money changers sit there changing Roman currency into Jewish. Jesus is stirred in His soul and is moved with flaming indignation at such profanation of the temple of God. The wrath of the Lamb is a reality.”

We read the following in the *KJV Commentary*: “Christ found in the court of the Gentiles a terrible scene. The Sanhedrin was permitting the selling of sacrificial animals at exorbitant prices and permitting the changing of foreign currency into Jewish money, which was required for the temple tax. Christ makes a whip and drives out both the animals and the wicked merchants. [We might want to interject here that Christ only *beats the animals*, not the people, compare chapter 11 of this booklet] He overturns the tables and scatters the coins across the floor. He commands the dove owners, Take these things hence. Christ then justifies this striking action, make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise (Malachi 3:1–3). Again, the failure of Judaism is emphasized. The disciples recall that this is the fulfillment of prophecy (Psalm 69:9). In verse 18, the Jews, who have been shocked by the action of Christ, demand a sign to substantiate His authority and conduct. However, this was a ridiculous request since the cleansing in itself was a sign (Malachi 3:1–3).”

Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible has this to say about Christ’s actions: “... he did it without the resistance of any of his enemies, either the market-people themselves, or the chief priests that gave them their licences, and had the posse templi—temple force, at their command. But the corruption was too plain to be justified; sinners’ own consciences are reformers’ best friends; yet that was not all, there was a divine power put forth herein, a power over the spirits of men; and in this non-resistance of theirs that scripture was fulfilled (Mal. 3:2, 3)...”

Chapter 4

How God Became a Man

Some doubt that Christ became human at all. Others believe that He was fully God and fully man when He was here on earth. Then there are those who teach that while the “human form” of Jesus was here on earth, the “Son of God” was still in heaven. They believe that when Jesus “died,” the Son of God continued to live.

None of these concepts are correct. As we explained in the previous chapter, the Word or the “*Logos*”; that is, the Son of God—Jesus Christ—BECAME flesh. When He was changed into flesh, divesting Himself of His divinity and laying aside His divine attributes and glory, He ceased to exist as an immortal Spirit Being. Rather, He BECAME—was CHANGED INTO—flesh.

How did this happen?

We read that Christ existed since all eternity. There was never a time when He did not exist. He was always the second Member of the God Family, which always existed as two immortal God Beings—God the Father and the Son. But Christ, who was slain from the beginning of the world, BECAME a human being—consisting fully of flesh—so that He could overcome sin in the flesh and DIE. When He became a man, He ceased to exist as a Spirit Being. When He died, He ceased to live—He did not continue to live, while in the grave for three days and three nights.

God the Father resurrected Him from the dead as an immortal Spirit Being, with the glory that He had before He became flesh.

God is Spirit, and so Jesus Christ, before He became a man, was Spirit because Christ was God (John 1:1). The Holy Spirit is not a Person, but the power and mind of God, flowing from God. As long as Christ was a God Being, His Holy Spirit flowed from Him, as it did and does from God the Father. But in order to bestow the Holy Spirit on others, one has to be a glorified God Being (compare John 7:37–39).

When Jesus became a human being, He no longer had the Holy Spirit on His own. Rather, it was the FATHER, who lived in Christ through HIS—the Father’s—Holy Spirit. It was the Father’s Holy Spirit of power, which dwelled in Christ from His human inception without measure.

When Christ became a human being, the Father changed the immortal Spirit Being—Jesus Christ—into a mortal human being, thereby also becoming the Father of the HUMAN being Jesus Christ. Later, the Father “reversed” the process by changing the human being—Jesus Christ—back into an immortal Spirit Being.

How did the Father accomplish the change from Spirit to flesh in the Person of Jesus? Actually, this had to be an extremely unique and awesome accomplishment, so that Jesus became the “ONLY-SO-begotten” Son of the Father (This phraseology, “only-so-begotten,” will be explained in the next chapter.)

First, we read that Mary was found pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. It was the power of God the Father who impregnated Mary with Jesus. To put it bluntly, from all the biblical evidence available to us, Jesus was changed into and became a sperm in the womb of Mary. Mary’s ovum was thus fertilized, as every human baby comes into existence through the fertilization of a female egg through a male sperm. In Jesus’ case, however, the sperm was not from a human father, but it was the result of a change from immortal to mortal, through the power of God the Father’s Holy Spirit.

SPIRIT IN MAN

When a human being is conceived in the womb of his or her mother, God gives that tiny little fetus a spirit—called the spirit in man. We do not know, exactly, how this is done—whether through an individual miraculous action and intervention on God’s part, or whether through an automatic “mechanism” and “procedure” which is somehow attached to or incorporated in the male sperm and brought into motion at the time of conception. In any event, this human spirit did not exist before in its individual “capacity”—we read that God “forms” or “creates” it in man (Zechariah 12:1), apparently at the time of conception. That individual human spirit, which is apparently created and comes into existence at the moment of conception, does of course not have any “memory” of anything prior to its “creation” in the human fetus. (For

Chapter 14

Driving the Money Changers Out of the Temple

It is not largely understood why Jesus acted toward the money changers in the way that He did. Let us read John 2:13–16:

“Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”

AUTHORITY

Christ spoke with authority! It is obvious from other passages that Jesus, who was recognized as a Rabbi, had authority. In John 3:1–2 we read: “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’” Here Nicodemus addressed Jesus as Rabbi which is translated “Teacher” (compare *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible*) or “Master” (which is an official title of honor—compare *Strong’s Hebrew & Greek Dictionaries*).

Therefore, even within the Jewish establishment, Jesus was not just some ordinary Jew of that time who was taking things into His own hands, but He was someone who had the right to exercise authority in the Temple, which was their place of worship. We note in Luke 4:16–19 that Jesus “went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read” which shows that He did have authority to take such action.

When Jesus drove out the money changers, He was driving out all of the commercialism and business that had permeated a place of worship—and He had the authority to take such action! Not only

more information on the Spirit in man, please read our free booklet, *The Theory of Evolution—A Fairy Tale for Adults?*)

It appears that this concept applies to Christ as well. When God the Father placed in Christ the HUMAN spirit at the time of His conception in the womb of Mary, it did not carry with it any memory of Christ's prior life as a God Being—as the HUMAN spirit of Christ did not exist prior to Christ's change into a mortal human being.

HOLY SPIRIT OF THE FATHER

At the same time, we read that Christ, when He was a man, clearly recalled His preexistence. We do not know exactly when Christ began to “remember,” but it appears that His memory came to Him, gradually, through the indwelling Holy Spirit of God the Father (compare, for example, Luke 10:18).

This conclusion is based on the fact that Christ told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would remind them of the things which He had told them. In the same way, it stands to reason that the Spirit of God the Father reminded Christ of prior events in His Life as a God Being.

When a human being dies, his human spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7). It is stored in heaven to be used for the purpose of a later resurrection of the person, as it retained everything of the person, including his outward appearance, thoughts, memories, experiences and actions in his life prior to death (See our booklet, *The Theory of Evolution—a Fairy Tale for Adults?*). But the spirit in man is not a person, and neither is the Holy Spirit.

When a person becomes converted and is properly baptized, he will receive from God the Holy Spirit, thereby giving him divine nature, potentially leading to immortal divine life at the time of his resurrection. When that converted person dies, both his human spirit and his Holy Spirit return to God, and are retained in heaven, until the time of his resurrection to an immortal spirit being.

The same happened at the time of Christ's death. His human spirit, together with God the Father's Holy Spirit, returned to God, and after three days and three nights in the grave, God the Father resurrected Christ from the dead as an immortal glorified God Being, using the spirit in man and the Father's Holy Spirit to create a *spiritual* body with all physical and spiritual memories, thoughts and accomplishments.

But in the case of Christ, even more had to be involved.

CHRIST'S SPIRIT

Returning to our discussion on Christ's physical birth, recall that we said that Christ was changed from spiritual to physical. He willingly gave up His glory and laid aside His divine attributes. The question arises as to what occurred at that moment to His Holy Spirit. As a God Being, He had the Holy Spirit on His own, but He did not have it on its own when He was human.

Three arguable possibilities might be discussed.

First, His Holy Spirit simply ceased to exist. This possibility must be ruled out. God's Holy Spirit does not simply cease to exist. For example, in the parable of the unprofitable servant, God takes back from him that which had been given to him—the Holy Spirit—to bestow it on someone else.

Another possibility could be that Christ's Holy Spirit changed into something mortal—the human spirit perhaps—when Christ changed into a human sperm. But there is really not much evidentiary basis for that conclusion, especially if considering the following third possibility, which is in harmony with God's usual course of action.

The third possibility is that Christ's Holy Spirit stayed with God the Father in heaven—clearly NOT as a self-conscious entity, and most assuredly NOT as the Son of God—but as God retains in heaven his human spirit after a converted person's death, together with the Holy Spirit given to and residing in that person, so it appears that when Christ became a human being, the Father "retained" Christ's Holy Spirit in heaven, which Christ "laid aside."

Subsequently, when Christ died and His human spirit and the Holy Spirit of the Father (which dwelt in the human Christ without measure) returned to the Father in heaven, both the Father's Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ (retained in heaven) would have combined or "merged."

When the Father resurrected Christ from the dead, He would have done so by (1) using Christ's human spirit, as well as (2) the Father's Spirit, which had dwelt in Christ without measure and (3) Christ's Spirit which had been retained in heaven. But it was still the FATHER who resurrected Christ through the power of HIS Spirit.

Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39)—that is, Christ could have only married a converted Christian.

But Mary Magdalene was not converted, nor does the Bible mention that there were *any* converted single female followers of Christ who would have been spiritually eligible for a marriage with Christ. For that reason alone, He *had to* stay single.

marriage duties (1 Corinthians 7:5). The last category describes those who have *voluntarily* chosen to refrain from getting married in order to fulfill certain responsibilities in preparation for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. John the Baptist belonged to that category, and so did Paul after his conversion (it appears that he might have been married before, but that his wife died prior to his conversion).

The same is true for Jesus. He knew about His end at a young age, causing hardship on a young woman that could have been avoided by not marrying in the first place. Christ would have more than likely been too busy to attend to a physical family. And as Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 7:32, 35, it is sometimes easier to accomplish this without the distractions of family life.

As mentioned, if Jesus had been married to Mary Magdalene, He would have most certainly said something before His death about her future, as He did regarding His mother. To ask John to look after His mother, but to totally ignore His wife would appear incomprehensible.

UNCONVERTED

There is another reason why Christ could not have been married when He was here on earth. At that time, beginning with His conception and birth and leading to His death, no one became converted (John 7:38–39). It is true that John the Baptist had received the Holy Spirit at the time of his conception, but this occurred six months *prior* to the conception of Jesus.

As we point out in chapter 3 of our free booklet, *Jesus Christ—A Great Mystery!*, not even Mary or Jesus’ half-brothers and -sisters initially became converted. None of His male and female disciples, included the Apostles, became converted until after His resurrection. The Bible does not mention that during Christ’s lifetime as a human being, any converted single young woman existed.

Christ’s mother Mary and at least some of His relatives, as well as His male and female disciples, became converted and received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, in 31 AD, after Christ’s ascension to heaven. This means that Mary Magdalene, who had been possessed at one time by seven demons (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9), was not converted during Jesus’ human existence, and to marry her would have been in violation of the command, to “only” marry someone “in the

To repeat, neither the Holy Spirit nor the spirit in man are self-conscious entities or persons. When Christ died, He was dead. There was no consciousness in Him, nor did God the Father’s Holy Spirit that had dwelt in Christ continue to “live” with consciousness while Christ was in the grave.

Likewise, Christ’s Holy Spirit that was retained by God the Father in heaven while Jesus lived on earth did not have any self-consciousness. But one can clearly see how the FALSE concept of a conscious *immortal soul* which keeps on living after a person dies could have entered the confused mind of man, as well as the FALSE concept that the *Son of God* continued to exist as a conscious Being in heaven, while the man Jesus lived on earth.

Today, as both God the Father and Jesus Christ are immortal glorified God Beings, both the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ dwell in a converted Christian. We read that there is ONE Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4), in the sense that both the Father and Christ are totally UNIFIED. And we also read that true Christians are to be ONE (John 17:11) or unified, AS God the Father and the Son are ONE (John 17:22) or unified.

Chapter 13

Was Jesus Married?

There is no statement in the Bible that says or even implies that Jesus was married. However, we find many biblical references revealing that other famous people in the Bible were married. We read about Abraham's wife Sarah; Isaac's wife Rebekah; Jacob's wives Leah and Rachel; Joseph's wife in Egypt; Moses' wife Zipporah; David's wives; and other wives of Old Testament prophets.

In the New Testament, we read in 1 Corinthians 9:5 that other apostles as well as Jesus' half-brothers had [believing] wives who traveled with them. Matthew 8:14 also mentions Peter's wife in passing, and it is later revealed that Peter or Cephas took his wife with him on his missionary journeys (1 Corinthians 9:5 in connection with John 1:42).

Toward the end of His crucifixion, Jesus asked John to look after His mother (John 19:26–27), but He does not say anything about a wife or a child. This would be strange if He was married and especially if Mary Magdalene was His wife, as some claim, since she also stood at the cross (John 19:25).

The fanciful idea that Jesus was married and that Mary Magdalene was His wife was totally unknown in the early church. When reading about Mary Magdalene's reported behavior after Christ's crucifixion, death and resurrection, as well as Christ's interaction with her, the idea that she had been married to Jesus must be totally rejected.

EUNUCHS

In Matthew 19:12, Christ speaks about three categories of people who do not marry—those who are born eunuchs; those who were made eunuchs by men; and those who have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of God's sake.

The first two groups refer to those who are born with birth defects or who were castrated by men, rendering them incapable of fulfilling their

It is true, that ultimately (as explained in our aforementioned booklet), at least three of Christ's four brothers came to the faith (James, Simeon and Jude, who wrote the letter of Jude). Perhaps Jose or Joseph became converted, too. We are also informed that James became a very influential leader in the early Church, and that he wrote the letter of James. But that happened LATER. Before then, Christ's brothers were unbelieving and hostile toward Christ (compare John 7:5). They might have been envious and even perhaps hateful toward Him. He referred to them as enemies within His own household—being without honor in His own home.

At the time of the crucifixion, Christ knew that Mary did not need to experience further agony from her own family. It was more than enough that she had to observe the brutal death of her beloved Son—feeling the sword piercing through her own soul also (Luke 2:35). Christ, in His wisdom and foresight, entrusted His mother to the care of John, knowing that he would be able to provide both physically and spiritually what Mary needed the most at that difficult time in her life.

As explained in our aforementioned booklet, tradition tells us that James, after his conversion and leadership role in the early church in Jerusalem, experienced a violent death in his faithful service to Christ. IF Mary was still alive by that time, a further transition of care for her would have been necessary. Christ, foreseeing this, entrusted the care of His mother to John, knowing that John would die long AFTER Mary would die.

Chapter 5

Jesus — The “Only-So-Begotten” Son of God

In the last chapter, we mentioned that Jesus Christ was the “only-SO-begotten” Son of God. However, technically, Jesus Christ is referred to, in English translations of the Bible, as the “only begotten” Son of God.

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

We read in John 1:17–18:

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The *only begotten* Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

This passage addresses the fact that Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father and the spiritual intent of the law, and that He made forgiveness of sin possible. He is referred to as the “only begotten Son” (as mentioned previously, some translate, the only begotten “God”), being in the “bosom” of God the Father, thereby showing the intimate and close relationship between the two members of the God Family.

In John 3:16, a similar statement is made:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His *only begotten Son*, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

We can only obtain salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ—the “only begotten Son”—and as one initial step, we must believe in His Sacrifice. But His death does not save us; we will be saved by His Life (Romans 5:10), which He lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

And so, we read in 1 John 4:9:

“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His *only begotten Son* into the world, that we might live through Him.”

BEGOTTEN SONS AND DAUGHTERS

On the other hand, converted Christians are also referred to as God's *begotten* sons and daughters and His begotten children (see our free

booklet, *Are You Already Born Again?*); and Christ is called the firstborn among many brethren. When we receive God's Holy Spirit, we are *begotten* children of God (1 Peter 1:1–3); and when we are changed to immortal Spirit beings at the time of Christ's return, we become God's *born again* children. Likewise, when Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, He became the first-BORN Son of God.

We read in John 1:12–13:

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name; who were born [begotten], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

But God must call us; it has nothing to do with our will to be called. And when we respond and "receive" the truth, we can become *begotten* children of God at the time of our baptism, when we receive the Holy Spirit. In the passage above, the term "begotten" should be used. The Greek word is "*gennao*" and can mean "begotten" or "born," and it can even describe the process from begetting to birth.

In Galatians 4:4–7, this development is further explained:

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption [better, "sonship"] as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Christ never sinned. He became a Man—fully flesh—to overcome sin in the flesh and to die for us, paying the penalty for our sins. We were under the law—its penalty—and so He was placed under the penalty of the law to make our redemption possible. We can receive God's Holy Spirit and become sons and daughters of God—first *begotten* children and finally *born again* children. The term "adoption" is an incorrect rendering; the better translation is "sonship."

Paul elaborates in Romans 8:14–23:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [better: sonship] by whom [which] we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our

willing to do—and that he would do so from the very moment (or the "same hour") of His death.

So even though the Bible does not specifically and expressly say why Jesus chose John, there are several important hints. Most commentaries show an understanding that Jesus HAD brothers and sisters, and they also give plausible explanations, based on Scripture, as to WHY Christ entrusted His mother to His beloved disciple who BELIEVED in Him—rather than to one of His brothers who did NOT believe in Him at that time of His death.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible points out, in John 19:26, that Jesus said, in effect:

"... take that disciple whom my power shall preserve from evil for thy son; and, while he considers thee as his mother, account him for thy child.' It is probable that it was because the keeping of [Mary] was entrusted to him that he was the only disciple of our Lord who died a natural death, God having preserved him for the sake of the person whom he gave him in charge... It is very likely that Joseph was dead previously to this."

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible elaborates, as follows:

"This was an honour put upon John, and a testimony both to his prudence and to his fidelity. If he who knows all things had not known that John loved him, he would not have made him his mother's guardian. It is a great honour to be employed for Christ, and to be entrusted with any of his interest in the world... It would be a care and some charge to John; but he cheerfully accepted it, and took her to his own home, not objecting [to] the trouble nor expense, nor his obligations to his own family, nor the ill-will he might contract by it... [Some commentaries say] that she lived to remove with him to Ephesus."

Both tradition and historical records report that John was later accompanied on his missionary travels by an elderly woman, who—it is felt—was none other than Mary, the mother of Jesus.

We might also add that John had more writing to do. At least five writings of his have been preserved and are part of the Holy Scriptures. He wrote the "gospel of John" (of which Mary was undoubtedly a good source of information), three letters (1 John; 2 John; and 3 John) and finally the last book of the Bible—the book of Revelation, while banished to the isle of Patmos.

does not teach that Mary stayed a virgin for the rest of her life. We read in Matthew 1:25 that Joseph ‘did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.’ The word ‘till’ or ‘until’ signifies that after the birth of Jesus, Joseph DID ‘know her,’ that is, he did have a sexual relationship with her...

“The Jews knew that Jesus was not the only son of Mary. They knew very well that Jesus had brothers and sisters. We read the account in Matthew 13:53–56: ‘Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter’s Son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?”’...

“Some teach that Christ’s ‘brothers’ were in fact Christ’s cousins... The word for brother is ‘*adelphos*.’ This Greek word is used in Matthew 1:2 and 4:21, clearly referring to literal brothers. The word for cousin is ‘*exadelphos*,’ meaning ‘from brothers.’ When the Jews pointed out in Matthew 13 that Christ’s brothers were with them, they used the word ‘*adelphos*,’ not the word ‘*exadelphos*.’

“Some propose that the brothers and sisters mentioned in Matthew 13 were Christ’s spiritual brothers and sisters, not His physical siblings. But... the Bible makes a clear distinction between Christ’s physical brothers and His spiritual brothers. In addition... Christ’s physical relatives did not believe in Him and so they could not possibly have been referred to as Christ’s spiritual brothers and sisters.”

Why, then, did Jesus ask John, rather than His brother James, to take care of Mary?

UNBELIEVING RELATIVES

One thing we need to realize is that at the time of Jesus’ death, none of His brothers believed in Him. Also, John was the ONLY disciple who stayed with Christ until He died—showing His dedication and bravery and the intimate relationship between Christ and His disciple whom He loved. Christ KNEW that John would take care of His mother—more than His half-brothers would have been able or

spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together... For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God... because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God... we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit [are] eagerly waiting for the adoption [sonship], the redemption of our body.”

As converted Christians in whom God’s Spirit dwells, we are *begotten* sons and daughters of God. We have already obtained sonship—we are already God’s (begotten) sons. But when we are changed into Spirit Beings, we will obtain the full sonship of immortal born again God Beings in God’s Family, as we are told in 1 John 3:1–2.

THE ONLY SO BEGOTTEN SON

There is a fundamental difference between Jesus Christ, the “only” begotten Son of God, and converted Christians, who are also called begotten sons of God. Christ has always existed; there was never a time when He did not exist. Since all eternity, He was the second member of the God Family—the Word or *Logos*, the Spokesman of God the Father, as John 1:1 explains. He was always the Son, as God was always the Father.

But when Christ became a human being as the “only begotten” of the Father (John 1:14), He became a BEGOTTEN Son of God IN THE FLESH. While we—flesh and blood human beings—become begotten children of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit in us, Christ—the immortal God being—became FLESH and the begotten Son of God through the miracle of transformation from Spirit to flesh. He was the ONLY Personage who was EVER begotten in this way, and in that sense, He was the only SO begotten Son of God. We also read that since His conception as a human being in Mary’s womb, He had God the Father’s Holy Spirit within Him without measure.

MIRACULOUS TRANSFORMATION

Notice how Christ’s miraculous transformation and begettal took place.

We read in Matthew 1:18–25:

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit... an angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream, saying, ‘...that which is conceived [literally: begotten] in [Mary] is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS [Savior], for He will SAVE His people from their sins.’ So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”

A parallel account of the announcement of the virgin birth can be found in Luke 1:26–38. Notice especially the angel’s statement in verses 31–32, 35: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest... The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”

No other human being was conceived and begotten in this way, and therefore, Christ IS the only begotten Son of God in that sense. But Christ is also the firstborn among many brethren, and converted Christians are also begotten sons of God. To emphasize the distinction between Christ’s “begettal” and our “begettal,” we referred to Christ as the only SO begotten Son of God, indicating that while others will also be called begotten sons of God, their “begettal” does not occur in the same way and does not describe the same process as Christ’s begettal did.

Chapter 12

“Behold Your Mother!”

When Christ was dying on the cross, He asked John to take care of His mother Mary. Some have concluded that Jesus was Mary’s only child, and that He therefore asked John to take care of His mother after His death, as there was nobody else in His immediate family who could have done so. However, this is not what the Bible teaches.

We read in John 19:25–27:

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother... When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”

THE DISCIPLE WHOM CHRIST LOVED

Almost every biblical scholar agrees that the “disciple whom Christ loved” was the disciple John (Compare for additional references, John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7). Especially in John 21, John identifies himself as the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (compare verses 20–24).

The fact that Jesus entrusted John, who was possibly one of His cousins [compare comments in the *“People’s New Testament”*], with the care of His mother, does not mean, however, that Mary did not have other children. The Bible clearly reveals that Mary and Joseph had additional children, AFTER Jesus was born.

CHRIST’S BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Our free booklet, *Jesus Christ—A Great Mystery*, proves this fact in great detail in chapter 3, “Christ’s Relatives,” on pages 28–30. You might want to read the entire passage in the booklet, but here are just a few highlights:

“The ‘Virgin Birth’ is clearly taught in Scripture. However, the Bible

Chapter 6

Jesus Christ's "Sinful Nature"

All of us are born with HUMAN NATURE, or, as the Bible puts it, with SINFUL FLESH. Christ never sinned, but He did come into sinful flesh (Romans 8:3). Human nature was passed on to Him through His mother, Mary, and He needed God's help to overcome sin in the flesh. He had the fullness of God's Spirit within Him without measure, from conception (John 3:34, *Authorized Version*), which enabled Him to stay sinless.

Christ was not in any way guilty or sinful because of "original sin." This false concept teaches that Adam's sin is passed on genetically to all human beings when they are conceived in their mother's womb. The Bible does not teach the concept of "original sin;" however, Christ was conceived with *human nature*. Romans 8:3 tells us that Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" to overcome and "condemn sin in the flesh."

IN THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH

When the Bible says that Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," it also expresses the concept that He came "in" or "into sinful flesh."

The fact that both expressions ("coming in the likeness of sinful flesh" and "coming in sinful flesh") convey identical thoughts has been clearly understood by commentators and translators. For instance, the *Jerusalem Bible* renders Romans 8:3–4 as follows:

"God has done what the Law, because of our unspiritual nature, was unable to do. God dealt with sin by sending his own Son in a body as physical as any sinful body, and in that body God condemned sin. He did this in order that the Law's just demands might be satisfied in us, who behave not as our unspiritual nature but as the spirit dictates."

The "likeness" of something or someone describes an IDENTICAL copy or representation of something or someone else.

The Greek word for “likeness” is “*homoioima*,” and means, quite literally, “something made like” or “being the same” (derived from “*homos*,” meaning “the same.”)

The same word is used in Romans 5:14: “... death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam...”

Adam’s descendants did not commit exactly the same sin that Adam had committed, in that they did not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they had sinned, of course, because death reigned over them, and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). We see, then, that the word “likeness” describes the identical duplication or representation of something else. If they HAD sinned according to the “likeness” of Adam’s sin, then they would have committed exactly the IDENTICAL sin.

The most convincing Scripture can perhaps be found in Philippians 2:7 where we read that Christ came “in the likeness (“*homoioima*”) of man.” This is another way of saying that He came as a man; that He BECAME a man; that He WAS a man (compare John 1:1, 14).

So, when He came in the “likeness” of sinful flesh, He came in or into sinful flesh. That is, He became a man with human nature, which is described as sinful, as it CANNOT be subject or obedient to the Law of God (Romans 8:7). However, with the help of God the Father, Christ WAS able to OVERCOME His human nature—self—and learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8).

OVERCOMING HUMAN NATURE

As Christ was fully man—as He came in the “likeness of man” and “in the likeness of sinful flesh”—He had to overcome His flesh and make sure that He would not succumb to the temptations of His flesh. That is why we read that Christ, “in the days of His flesh... offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” (Hebrews 5:7). In that way, He overcame self.

We read that He had a human will, which did not want to die, but He submitted to God’s Will, saying, “... not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39), adding, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (verse 41). He knew beforehand what would await Him, and

(1 Peter 5:5; compare James 4:6). We must be careful and diligent, lest through a root of bitterness, “anyone fall short of the grace of God” (Hebrews 12:15).

When we read that Christ was full of grace, we need to understand that He was gracious to people, full of compassion and mercy. Since He was also full of truth, we need to comprehend that He never lied or compromised with God’s truth in order to “please” someone or avoid confrontation or persecution.

The *One Volume Commentary* by Dummelow states regarding John 1:14: “... grace is the divine favour and loving-kindness; truth ... is not simply veracity, but holiness in general... Christ was full of grace and holiness, not that He might keep them to Himself, but that He might bestow them upon men.”

We must become people who are full of grace and truth—to be used for the benefit of others (compare Ephesians 4:29). Hebrews 12:28 says: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” We are to be “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10)—not for selfish purposes, but for the purpose of sharing it with others.

We must be gracious and compassionate, filled with lovingkindness and goodwill, bestowing favors on others, as we have opportunity (compare Galatians 6:10). At the same time, we must be upright and dependable, truthful and trustworthy. As Christ’s disciples, we must grow in HIS grace and in HIS knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

We must develop in us and embrace Christ’s gracious character traits, and we must steadily increase in the understanding of Christ—including how to answer someone truthfully and tactfully who asks us about our faith (1 Peter 3:15).

kind, merciful, gracious, doing good to all, and seeking man's welfare by great sacrifices and love; so much so, that it might be said to be characteristic of him, or he 'abounded' in favors to mankind. He was also 'full of truth.' He declared the truth. In him was no falsehood..."

In 1 Corinthians 16:3, we read that Paul told the disciples that he wanted to send someone to "bear your gift to Jerusalem." The *Authorized Version* says, "your liberality." The Greek word is "*charis*"—commonly translated as "grace." This shows that the concept of grace includes gifts, which are given freely and with liberality.

We read in John 1:16–17: "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

The commentary of *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown* explains that the phrase "grace for grace" means, "grace upon grace... in successive communications and larger measures, as each was able to take it in."

John was not saying here that we need to sin more so that God's forgiveness of our sins might abound (compare Romans 6:1–2 and Jude 4), but that Christ bestowed gradually more and more favors on His disciples.

GRACIOUS

The Greek word for grace can also mean "gracious." We read that Jesus spoke with "gracious words" (Luke 4:22), so that all marveled at them. And so, we are admonished today to always speak "with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6).

When we read that God gives us grace, then this not only means forgiveness of our sins upon repentance, but it can also refer to special favors and physical and spiritual help that we may need. We read in Hebrews 4:16: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

The Greek word for grace ("*charis*") can also mean "thanks" or "thankworthy" (compare Romans 6:17; 1 Peter 2:19 in the *Authorized Version*). To be truly thankful is a gift or favor from God which we must use and apply toward God and man.

Christ, full of grace, is willing to bestow His grace on us. But we also read that we must be truly humble in order to obtain God's grace

He said to His disciples: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished" (Luke 12:50). But if He had followed His human will to escape His pre-ordained fate (giving in to the will of His "weak flesh"), He would have sinned, in that He would have disobeyed God's Plan for Him and for all of mankind.

If Christ would not have had "sinful" human flesh or human nature, He would not have been susceptible to Satan's temptations either (since God cannot be tempted by evil, James 1:13), but He clearly was tempted by Satan and had to conquer him (Matthew 4:10; Mark 8:33). When Peter tried unknowingly to circumvent the Will of God, Christ told him: "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense [a stumbling block] to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matthew 16:23).

Just as Christ overcame His human nature, Satan the devil, and the world (John 16:33), so must we (Revelation 3:21). With the living Christ in us, we CAN obey God and become and stay righteous, so that the "righteous requirement of the law" CAN be "fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:4). We do not HAVE TO sin. Of and by itself, human nature cannot be subject or obedient to the Law of God, but God's Holy Spirit in us helps us to overcome human nature and become obedient.

Christ NEVER sinned (Hebrews 4:15). But of Himself, He could do nothing (John 5:19, 30). It was the Father IN Christ who did the works (John 14:10), including the "works" of overcoming and staying obedient. With the help of God the Father's Spirit within Christ, without measure, leading, guiding and empowering Him, He could and did overcome the human nature of His "sinful flesh," NEVER sinning even once (1 Peter 2:21–22; 1 John 3:5), and thereby becoming the perfect Sacrifice for us, paying the death penalty for our sins on our behalf and giving us the opportunity to "become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

preaching the Word of God, He did not give in to them (Matthew 12:46–50).

Christ had a special love for John, to whom He entrusted His mother; but He did not overlook his mistakes and weaknesses. He called him and his brother James “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17), and He rebuked them when they were willing to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans (Luke 9:54–56).

Christ was a human being—fully human—but He never denied His past and His future as a God Being (John 5:18), knowing full well that this would cost Him His life.

FULL OF GRACE

He was a man full of grace and truth.

John 1:14 says that “... the Word [the “*Logos*,” that is, Jesus Christ the Spokesman] became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory... full of grace and truth.”

The Greek word “*charis*,” which is commonly translated as “grace,” has a variety of meanings. It can and very often does refer to God’s forgiveness of our sins—His “unmerited pardon”—and to our justification. We read in Romans 3:24 that we are “being justified freely by His grace” (compare also Titus 3:7).

FAVOR

But we have to realize that Jesus Christ never sinned and that He therefore did not have to receive any “unmerited pardon” for sin. Still, we read in Luke 2:52 that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in grace with God and men. Most translations render this verse as, “Jesus increased... in favor with God and men,” but in the Greek, the word “*charis*” is used which is translated as grace in John 1:14.

This shows that the word “grace” can also have the meaning of “favor.” We find that later, “great grace was upon” all of the early apostles when they witnessed Christ’s resurrection with great power (Acts 4:33).

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible states that Christ was full of “favor, kindness, and mercy to men; teaching the way to the kingdom of God, with all the simplicity, plainness, dignity, and energy of truth.”

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible supports this understanding, stating: “The word ‘grace’ means ‘favors,’ gifts, acts of beneficence. He was

the traditions of the elders (Matthew 9:14).

He refused to uphold the numerous washings invented by the religious “establishment” (Mark 7:1–5, 8), and He rejected the burdens which they had created (Matthew 23:4), including those pertaining to the Sabbath, and He showed them how to keep the Sabbath in the right way:

He healed on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1–6; Luke 13:10–17); He did not rebuke His innocent disciples to pluck grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1–8); and He told a man whom He had healed to carry his bed on the Sabbath (John 5:5–15).

As we will explain in chapter 15, He refused to condemn the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11), and He refused to become an arbitrator for two people fighting over their inheritance (Luke 12:13–15). He uttered strong words to the unyielding Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees, calling them hypocrites, brood of vipers and worse (Matthew 23:13–36).

He never shied away from telling the truth and preaching boldly, even if it meant that the audience would become offended (Matthew 15:12–14; John 6:60–62).

NO VIOLENCE

He never resorted to or preached violence against other human beings (Matthew 26:51–52). We need to note that He did not beat the money changers, but used His whip for the animals (John 2:14–16). The *New International Version* translates John 2:15 quite accurately: “So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all of them from the temple area, *both sheep and cattle*; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.”

He showed no disrespect toward His parents. As a 12-year-old boy, He submitted to His parents (Luke 2:51), and later, He honored the wishes of His mother at the wedding in Cana (John 2:3–5), but He did not submit to the will of man, if that was not in accordance with the Will of God. When Peter tried to discourage Him, telling Him that He should not die, He answered, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men” (Matthew 16:23).

When His mother and His brothers tried to prevent Him from

Chapter 7

The Rejected Prophecies of Isaiah 53

Isaiah 53 prophesies about the First Coming of Jesus Christ. However, most Jews deny that Isaiah 53 speaks about the Messiah and His First Coming.

We will discuss their erroneous rationale later in this chapter. First, let us briefly point out that Jesus Christ was and is the Messiah; that Isaiah addresses the Messiah’s First Coming; and that Jesus fulfilled precisely the prophecies in Isaiah 53.

ISAIAH 53 AND CHRIST’S FIRST COMING

For instance, Isaiah 53:1 (“Who has believed our report?”) is quoted in John 12:37–38 in reference to Jesus.

Isaiah 53:3 (“He is despised and rejected by men”) finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ (compare John 1:10–11; Luke 19:14; Mark 6:3).

Isaiah 53:4 (“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”) is quoted in Matthew 8:17 as pertaining to Jesus.

Isaiah 53:5 (“And by His stripes we are healed”) is quoted in 1 Peter 2:24 in respect to Jesus.

Isaiah 53:6 (“All we like sheep have gone astray”) is quoted in 1 Peter 2:25 in reference to the Sacrifice of Jesus.

Isaiah 53:7 (“He opened not His mouth”) was fulfilled in Jesus during His “trial” (Matthew 26:63; 27:12–14), and the passage is directly quoted in Acts 8:32.

Isaiah 53:7 (“He was led as a lamb to the slaughter”) is a clear reference to Jesus Christ—“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, 36).

Isaiah 53:8 was fulfilled in its entirety by Jesus Christ. It reads: “He was taken from prison and from judgment... For He was cut off from the land of the living.” It is quoted, in reference to Christ, in Acts 8:33. Our free booklet, *Jesus Christ—A Great Mystery*, explains

that Jesus' "arrest" and "trial" were illegal, even under Jewish law at the time, and it shows in what way He was taken "from prison" and "from judgment" or a "just" sentence.

Isaiah 53:9 ("He had done no violence. Nor was any deceit found in His mouth") was fulfilled in Christ, and even Pilate admitted repeatedly that Jesus was innocent (Mark 15:14; John 18:38; 19:4, 6).

Isaiah 53:9 ("And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death") was fulfilled, even in death, by Jesus Christ, as stated in Matthew 27:57–60. He was placed in the grave of a rich man, while He was supposed to be buried or disposed of like any other "criminal" (Luke 23:33) in the fire of the valley of Hinnom—"Gehenna."

Isaiah 53:9 ("Nor was any deceit in His mouth") is quoted in 1 Peter 2:22 in reference to Jesus.

Isaiah 53:12 ("And He was numbered with the transgressors") was fulfilled by Christ in two different ways, compare Mark 15:28 and Luke 22:37. He was numbered with the transgressors because He was crucified as a criminal, together with two criminals, and also, because Peter used His sword to defend Christ at the time of His "arrest."

Isaiah 53:12 ("And made intercession for the transgressors") was fulfilled by Christ, as recorded in Luke 23:34.

In addition, there are further passages in Isaiah 53 which find their direct fulfillment in Christ's First Coming.

Isaiah 53:2 said that the "Servant" (Isaiah 52:13) did not have special beauty or comeliness in His appearance as a man. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy, looking like an ordinary Jew who had to be identified to the soldiers by Judas Iscariot.

Isaiah 53:3 also predicted that men would despise the "Servant" of God and hide their faces from Him. We read in the New Testament that when Jesus was bleeding on the cross, onlookers, as it were, hid their faces from Him and despised Him (Matthew 27:39). Likewise, even His closest disciples fled from Him (Matthew 26:56), and Peter flatly denied that he knew Him (Matthew 26:75).

As Isaiah 53:5 prophesied that His "chastisement" was for our peace, the New Testament confirms that Jesus Christ fulfilled and fulfills this prophecy (Romans 5:1).

Isaiah 53:5, 8, 11, 12 points out that the Messiah suffered and died for our sins, so the New Testament confirms in various places that

Chapter 11

Jesus' Human Feelings, Emotions and "Limitations"

We explained before that Jesus was fully man when He was here on earth. He had "sinful" human nature (even though He NEVER sinned, not even once), a human will, and human "limitations." We read that He was "tired" from a long journey (John 4:6). He had need of sleep (Luke 8:23).

He ate and drank—such that He was even wrongly accused of being a glutton and a winebibber (Matthew 11:19).

When considering Jesus' conduct, we must firmly emphasize that He never sinned—not even in His thoughts. He always controlled His emotions and brought all His thoughts under the obedience of God the Father, as we have to bring all our thoughts "into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

As we discussed in the last chapter, He wept at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:35) and again when He thought of the future of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41).

He showed much compassion (Matthew 9:36; 15:32), but He also expressed anger toward the hypocritical Pharisees and their proud and envious feelings, and their hardness of heart and unwillingness to change (Mark 3:5).

He prayed much, knowing that He needed help from His Father (Hebrews 5:7).

CUSTOMS OF MEN

He refused to live by the standards and traditions of men if they were not in accordance with the law of God or if they violated the letter or the *spirit* of the law:

He spoke publically with a Samaritan woman (John 4:27), communicated and ate with "sinners" and "tax collectors" (Mark 2:15–16), and did not teach His disciples to fast in accordance with

FULL OF COMPASSION

Christ was a man full of compassion (Matthew 9:36). When He saw the grief of the people, including the ones whom He loved (see verse 5), it undoubtedly had an impact on Him and His emotions. We read that when Jesus saw Mary and the Jews weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled (verse 33). Jesus wept with those who wept (compare Romans 12:15).

In addition, in light of what we discussed above, there seems to be an even more compelling explanation as to why Jesus wept. He was grieved about their doubt of Him and His ability to heal, and their lack of faith and vision.

It is a good lesson for us today—not to doubt what God and Jesus Christ can do in our lives and to make sure that we believe what the Word of God clearly reveals to us.

Jesus fulfilled these prophecies (Romans 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13).

It is, of course, well known that Jesus Christ died for our sins and transgressions, and that through His death and life we obtain forgiveness and justification—as this was clearly prophesied to happen in Isaiah 53:8, 10, 11.

In its introduction to Isaiah 53, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* states:

“This chapter foretells the sufferings of the Messiah, the end for which he was to die... the Messiah was to suffer for sins not his own; but that our iniquities were laid on him, and the punishment of them exacted of him... He shows the meekness and placid submission with which he suffered a violent and unjust death, with the circumstances of his dying with the wicked... and that, in consequence of his atonement, death, resurrection, and intercession, he should procure pardon and salvation to the multitudes... and ultimately triumph over all his foes... That this chapter speaks of none but Jesus must be evident to every unprejudiced reader who has ever heard the history of his sufferings and death.”

JEWISH REJECTION

Why, then, do Jewish commentaries reject the clear meaning of Isaiah 53?

It should be pointed out that not all Jews do or did this. In fact, in ancient times, the Jews understood the passage to apply to the Messiah. *The Ryrie Study Bible* explains:

“Traditional Jewish interpretation understood the passage to be speaking of the Messiah, as, of course, did the early Christians, who believed Jesus to be the Messiah (Acts 8:35). Not until the 12th century did the view emerge that the NATION [of] ISRAEL is referred to, a view that has since become DOMINANT JUDAISM. But the servant is distinguished from the ‘people’ (Isaiah 53:8). He is an innocent victim, something that could not be said of the nation (53:9).”

Sadly, however, as stated above, Judaism today rejects Isaiah 53 as applying to the Messiah, but teaches that it refers to the JEWISH NATION.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible states in his introduction

to Isaiah 53: "The Jews have endeavored to apply it to their sufferings in captivity..."

The Jewish commentary, *Soncino*, states this view, as follows:

"The Babylonians, or their representatives, having known the servant, i.e. EXILED ISRAEL IDEALIZED, in his humiliation and martyrdom, and now seeing his exaltation and new dignity, describe their impressions and feelings..."

In line with this thinking, the *Soncino* commentary "explains away" rather obvious passages in Isaiah 53 in the following "unique" manner:

Regarding verse 8 ("He was cut off from the land of the living"), the commentary says: "He was cut off from his homeland by the Babylonians." Regarding verse 9, referring to "His grave," the commentary says that this means "the graves of the Jews in exile."

As the idea is that the "Servant" refers to the people of Israel or Judah, passages which refer to the innocence of the "Servant" are interpreted in this way:

"[Regarding verse 9:] On account of his [the people of Israel's] sufferings he was deemed to be a sinner, and, therefore, classed with them. He was, therefore, OFTEN put to death as a criminal..."

"[Regarding verses 10–12:] The servant's [the people of Israel's] patiently borne suffering for other people's sins will culminate in the spiritual uplift of many and in his own physical or spiritual rejuvenation. He will enjoy a glorious future, offspring, long life, prosperity and influence..."

"[Regarding verse 11:] The servant will live to use his knowledge of God to justify his ways to man..."

These terrible misinterpretations not only totally reject the saving work of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ Himself, they even apply everything TO the people that Christ would do FOR the people. According to their false understanding, it is now the PEOPLE of Israel and Judah—rather than the GOD of Israel and Judah—whom Isaiah is allegedly describing. They claim that it is the PEOPLE—NOT GOD—who will bring about the work of salvation!!!

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible sheds more light on the Jewish misconceptions regarding the Messiah, when making the following comments regarding Isaiah 53:12:

"Notwithstanding the evidence that it refers to the Messiah, yet

here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

It is obvious from this passage that the disciples lacked sufficient faith to heal the boy, and Jesus was obviously frustrated at this (see verse 17). The concept of faith is also highlighted in Matthew 8:8–10: "The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, "Go," and he goes; and to another, "Come," and he comes; and to my servant, "Do this," and he does it.' When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'"

Faith always seemed to be in short supply. Further unbelief is shown in John 11:37: "And some of them (the Jews) said, 'Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?'" Here was doubt again!

In spite of all of the miracles that Jesus performed, there always seemed to be doubt. In John 11:25–26 we read: "Jesus said to her (Martha), 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"

Jesus was trying to tell Martha what He was about to do (see verse 23 where Jesus told her that her brother would rise again). But even though Martha said that she knew that whatever He asked of God, God would give to Him (verse 22), she could not really see or believe that Lazarus would be raised up right there and then. Even though she claimed to believe that He was the prophesied Christ and the Son of God (verse 27), she could not comprehend what Jesus would do, thinking rather that He was talking about the resurrection at the last day (verse 24).

It seemed that even His close disciples and friends, and those who had seen such awesome miracles performed, failed to recognize what He was really capable of doing. They lived in grief and sorrow, confused and scattered, incapable of finding a way out of misery, discomfort, frustration and pain. They needed help.

from a short stay in Paradise back to a very troubled Earth. Pope Leo I summed it up this way: 'In his humanity Jesus wept for Lazarus; in his divinity he raised him from the dead.'

This last explanation is clearly wrong, as Lazarus was dead and in his grave—not in a Paradise in heaven.

Some feel that Jesus wept because He felt sorrow, sympathy, and compassion for all mankind. Others think that it was the rage He felt against the tyranny of death over mankind.

Let us look more closely at the passage in question. In John 11 we read that Lazarus was sick. In verse 4 it states: "When Jesus heard that, He said, 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'" Jesus stayed where He was for two more days, and verse 11 states: "These things He said, and after that He said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.'"

In the space of two days, Jesus had said that the sickness was not for death (that is, Lazarus would not remain dead, but would shortly be brought back to life), and that He would go and wake him up. His disciples were thinking of normal daily sleep, not the sleep of death, and "Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead...'" (verse 14).

Why then did Jesus weep at the grave, knowing that He would raise up Lazarus within the next moment?

LACK OF FAITH

The disciples had seen Jesus perform many miracles.

In Matthew 17:14–21 we read the following: "And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 'Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.' Then Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.' And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast it out?' So Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from

it is certain also that the Jews expected no such personage as that here referred to. They looked for a magnificent temporal prince and conqueror; and an impostor would not have attempted to evince the character, and to go through the circumstances... here described. What impostor ever would have attempted to fulfill a prophecy by subjecting himself to a shameful death?...

"We are then prepared to ask an infidel how he will dispose of this prophecy. That it existed seven hundred years before Christ is as certain as that the poems of Homer or Hesiod had an existence before the Christian era; as certain as the existence of any ancient document whatever. It will not do to say that it was forged – for this is not only without proof, but would destroy the credibility of all ancient writings..."

The clear answer is that Isaiah 53 refers to Jesus Christ who, being God, became man in order to die for our sins. He was brutally tortured, murdered, buried and resurrected. He is acting today as our merciful High Priest, and He WILL return as a conquering hero, as many New Testament Scriptures confirm (compare Revelation 19:11–16).

There is no "salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The time will come when everybody will understand this, and also, that Isaiah prophesied about the true and only Messiah—Jesus Christ. Then, everyone will bow his knee "at the name of Jesus," confessing that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9–11).

Chapter 10

The Resurrection of Lazarus

In John 11:35 we read the shortest verse in the Bible in the English translation: “Jesus wept.” It is only in the book of John that we read about the death and raising from the dead of Lazarus by Jesus.

WHY DID JESUS WEEP?

Why did Jesus weep at this particular time? Various authors and commentaries have offered numerous ideas and explanations.

For example, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary* states the following: “Different constructions were put upon Christ’s weeping. Some made a kind and candid interpretation of it, and what was very natural (John 11:36): ‘Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!’ They seem to wonder that he should have so strong an affection for one to whom he was not related, and with whom he had not had any long acquaintance. Others made a peevish unfair reflection upon it, as if these tears bespoke his inability to help his friend.”

In *Wesley’s Notes* we read: “Jesus wept – Out of sympathy with those who were in tears all around him, as well as from a deep sense of the misery sin had brought upon human nature.”

Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible states: “Jesus wept. As he was going along to the grave, see John 11:28; as he was meditating upon the state of his friend Lazarus, the distress his two sisters were in, and the greater damnation that would befall the Jews then present, who, notwithstanding the miracle, would not believe in him. This shows him to be truly and really man, subject to like passions, only without sin.”

WRONG EXPLANATION

Wikipedia adds that “the death and raising of Lazarus portends the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Another stated theory is that Jesus felt the trauma that Lazarus would experience when transitioning

Chapter 8

The Shroud of Turin and Jesus Christ

Many believe that the Shroud of Turin pictures Jesus Christ at the time of His death, burial and resurrection. Apart from the fact that John 19:40 shows that Christ was wound in linen CLOTHES and that John 11:44 describes the custom of Jewish burials in using several CLOTHES and binding them about the dead body, in addition to the dead person's face being wrapped with or in a cloth (a head swath), there are numerous additional problems with the idea that the one-piece shroud may be an authentic depiction of Jesus Christ.

On April 17, 2015, the *Wall Street Journal* reported:

“When the Shroud of Turin goes on display Sunday [April 19, 2015] for the first time in five years [while being on display until June 24, 2015], it will revive a long-running debate as to whether it is a medieval fabrication or—as Catholic devotees have believed for centuries—the burial cloth of Jesus Christ... The 14½-foot-long piece of linen, which bears a front-and-back image of a dead man's body, is owned by the pope but safeguarded by the archdiocese of Turin.

“... the [Catholic] church does not take a stance as to whether it is authentic or not, leaving that question to scientists and historians. The results of carbon-14 tests in 1988 suggested the shroud was no older than the 13th century, but other experts have since suggested that the fabric tested may have been contaminated by centuries of handling...”

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, dated October 14, 1988, Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero said that the “calendar age range assigned to the shroud cloth, with a 95% confidence level, is from 1260 to 1390 A.D.”

To contradict this conclusion, some point at traces of pollen from plants found only in the east Mediterranean [The retort is that those could have been easily brought to the place of the “creation” of the shroud.]. It has also been argued that extraneous matter, or radioactivity, could have skewed the carbon-dating results (*The Economist*, May

5, 2015). Further, it has been suggested that the great earthquakes mentioned in the Bible at the time of Jesus' death and His resurrection (Matthew 27:51–53; 28:1–2) influenced, corrupted and falsified the finding of the radio-carbon test (*The Today Show*, NBC, June 17, 2015). All these proposals are of course without any scientific or archeological proof.

NO LONG HAIR

However, the real biblical reason, which rules out totally the possibility of an accurate depiction of Christ on the Shroud of Turin, can be found in the writings of Paul to the Corinthian church.

1 Corinthians 11:2–16 proves that the Shroud of Turin could not possibly picture Jesus Christ, as it shows a man with long hair, and Christ did not wear long hair (verse 14).

We are told that a man is not to wear “long hair,” and that even nature teaches us that wearing long hair is a “dishonor” to a man. The Greek word for “dishonor” is “*atimia*.” This word, or a related form (“*atimos*”), can be found in the following additional passages: Romans 9:21; 1 Corinthians 15:43; 2 Corinthians 6:8; 2 Timothy 2:20; 2 Corinthians 11:21 (translated as “shame”); and Romans 1:26 (translated as “vile”).

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance points out that “*atimia*” can describe a comparative indignity or disgrace (under No. 819). The related word, “*atimos*,” can describe something “less honorable [comparative degree]” (under No. 820).

THE NAZARITE VOW

The Old Testament permitted a man on special occasions to wear long hair. This exception is set forth in Numbers 6, known as “the Law of the Nazarite.” Men were permitted to make a temporary “Nazarite vow” to God. During the time of their vow, a Nazarite was not to cut his hair, but let “the locks of the hair of his head grow” (verse 5). In addition, he was not to touch a dead person, eat any fresh grapes or raisins, or drink anything made from grapes, including wine. This law was inseparably connected with the ritual law of sacrifices: At the end of the separation, the Nazarite had to bring several offerings, and he had to go through additional rituals before the priest.

and to follow Him completely. Of course, whatever physical possessions Christ might have had, they NEVER induced Him to make that mistake about which He warned others.

Scriptures do seem to indicate that Christ owned a house—and perhaps even more than one. But ultimately, it is not of great importance whether Jesus owned or rented a house, or whether He dwelled with His disciples in their houses, as long as we understand that Jesus was not a homeless vagabond or a hippie. He was a living example of God's Way of Life, and the Bible tells us that God wants us to prosper in all things (3 John 2). Scriptures also tell us that when we obey God (and Christ always obeyed Him, not sinning once), God would bless us financially (compare Malachi 3:8–10). David even said that he was young and grew old, and he never saw the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread (Psalm 37:25).

In this booklet, we do not take any position on whether or not it is wise or unwise to buy a house in the present financial climate. This is a personal decision which everyone must make, based on his or her own individual circumstances. Some may feel that they can afford to buy a house, while others have bought houses with far-too-high mortgages and with little or no equity, and because of the collapse of the housing market and the recent great recession or depression, banks foreclosed on them and they lost or walked away from their houses, as they were unable to pay their mortgages.

We know that terrible and “expensive” times are ahead of us, but we also know that when we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, God will give us all the physical things that we need, including food, clothing and shelter. God the Father most certainly did this for Christ—the prime example of someone who did seek first in His life God's Kingdom and His righteousness. Christ's mission was to preach the gospel and to finish the Work which the Father gave Him to do, and when He died, He exclaimed: “It is finished.” Christ's disciples are to follow that example today.

had wives and that they did not leave them, but they continued their responsibilities as husbands (compare 1 Corinthians 9:5; the reference to “Cephas” is the Aramaic name for Peter; compare John 1:42). What both Jesus and His disciples gave up was their daily jobs—the work they had been trained in. Some left their family business (compare Matthew 4:20, 22; Mark 1:18, 20; Luke 5:27–28). Provision was made for them by the support of others (compare Luke 8:1–3).

We should also recognize that the soldiers did not want to cut Jesus’ garments and clothing when He was hanging on the cross (or better, stake), but they cast lots to determine who should receive them (Matthew 27:35). Even though their conduct was in fulfillment of a prophecy, it is also worthwhile to mention that His garments and clothing were apparently not “cheap,” but of such a quality and value that the soldiers were willing to cast lots for them.

APOSTLES HAD HOUSES

The fact that Jesus told John in His final hours to take care of His mother Mary, and that John took her into his own house (John 19:25–27), does not contradict the concept that Jesus might have owned a house. Rather, Jesus wanted John to take care of His mother, having the greatest confidence that John—the disciple whom He loved—would be the best person to carry out that heavy responsibility. (For an in-depth discussion of Jesus’ statements to John, please see chapters 12 and 13.)

Some critics claim that in passages such as Matthew 19:21, Mark 10:21, and Luke 18:22, Jesus told His followers to dispose of all their possessions; yet, He Himself owned a house. They conclude that Christ was a hypocrite and that His teachings must be rejected. However, any HONEST view of these Scriptures forces us to conclude that Jesus spoke to one particular rich man who had made a god out of his riches. He was not willing to give up his idol to follow Christ. Knowing this young man’s heart, Christ told him that he needed to overcome his idolatry, and it was in that particular case that He told him to sell whatever he had (note, these passages do not single out the possession of houses). It is true that Christ made clear to all of us that we must forsake everything—whatever it may be—IF those (physical) things would prevent us from building a right relationship with God

The long hair of the Nazarite vow reflected, in physical terms, the willingness of the person to be under authority — under the authority of God. Sometimes, certain people were consecrated from their birth as Nazarites, to be separated to God throughout their lives. Famous examples are Samson (Judges 13:5,7); Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11); and — perhaps — John the Baptist (Luke 1:15; Luke 7:33).

JESUS A NAZARENE

Jesus, however, was not a Nazarite. He grew up in the city of Nazareth and was therefore called a “Nazarene” (Matthew 2:23) — which is of course quite different from being a Nazarite.

Since we have no record of a written Old Testament prophecy regarding Christ as being called a Nazarene, we conclude that Matthew is referring here to an oral prophecy (He specifically states that this had been “spoken” of Jesus.) However, in Isaiah 11:1, Christ is called the “Branch,” in Hebrew “*nezer*.” This Hebrew word is very similar to the Hebrew word for Nazarene. It has therefore been suggested that Jews at the time of Jesus might have understood this verse to refer to someone from Nazareth.

In any event, Christ was not a Nazarite, because He did many things, which were prohibited for Nazarites.

Those who took the vow of a Nazirite did not cut their hair, but they were also prohibited from drinking any wine or touching a dead body (Numbers 6:4–6). Christ, however, did drink wine (Luke 22:14–18; Matthew 11:19), and He did touch dead bodies (Luke 8:51–55).

If Christ had been a Nazirite, He would have broken His vow and thereby violated one of God’s laws. But He said that He had kept His Father’s commandments (John 15:10), including all ritual laws still in force and effect at His time, and we read that He never sinned. The Bible defines sin, however, as the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4, *Authorized Version*). Therefore, Christ could NOT have been a Nazirite, wearing long hair.

CHRIST LOOKED LIKE AN AVERAGE JEW

Christ was a Jew, and He looked like an ordinary Jewish man, without special beauty in appearance (compare Isaiah 53:2). He was able to escape on occasion, by mingling with the crowd and going

“through the midst of them” (Luke 4:30; John 8:59).

Apart from the Bible, archeology and history also confirm as well that the Jews at the time of Christ did not wear long hair, as will be more fully discussed below. Christ, therefore, did not either; otherwise, He would have stood out in a crowd and a special identification through Judas (who identified Him by kissing Him) would not have been necessary.

Recently, Israeli and British forensic anthropologists and computer programmers got together to create Christ’s face featured in “Popular Mechanics,” a 1.2 million-circulation magazine. They did not mean to imply that Christ actually looked the way the magazine cover portrayed Him, as they used the skull of a Jew from the first century — not, of course, the actual skull of Jesus. They nevertheless determined that Christ did not wear long hair. Other experts agree with that conclusion. On February 24, 2004, *Reuters* wrote:

“... Jesus didn’t have long hair, said physical anthropologist Joe Zias, who has studied hundreds of skeletons found in archeological digs in Jerusalem.’ [He also mentioned:] ‘Jewish men back in antiquity did not have long hair.’ ‘The Jewish texts ridiculed long hair as something Roman or Greek,’ said New York University’s Lawrence Schiffman. Along with extensive writings from the period, experts also point to a frieze on Rome’s Arch of Titus, erected after Jerusalem was captured in AD 70 to celebrate the victory, which shows Jewish men with short hair taken into captivity. Erroneous descriptions of Jesus in Western art have often misled film makers in their portrayal of Jesus, experts say.”

It is important to realize that virtually all depictions of Christ do not accurately reflect His appearance as a human being on earth. He did not wear long flowing hair, and He did not look like a woman. He was a carpenter, a builder, and He was also the leader of former fishermen. Even His hair color was probably not blond—as depicted on most paintings—but black, as the Hebrew people at the time of Christ were recognized as having predominantly black hair.

TEMPORARY NAZARITE VOW

In the early New Testament church, we do find occasional references to some who continued to make a temporary Nazarite vow. It is possible that even Paul made a temporary Nazarite vow for a short

there, because that was the location where Joseph had been born; but even then, we find that later they were no longer in a stable, but in a house (Matthew 2:11)—perhaps a house which was owned by Joseph’s relatives. We point this out to show that it was not unusual for people at that time to own houses.

We must also recognize that Joseph and Mary were betrothed to get married—they were already called husband and wife (Matthew 1:18–19, 24), but they had not yet consummated their marriage—and Joseph, as a just man who might not even have been anymore in his “teenage years,” had certainly financially prepared for his marriage with Mary (compare Proverbs 24:27; 27:23–27).

FOXES HAVE HOLES

As recorded in Matthew 8:20, Jesus said that foxes have holes and birds have nests but the Son of Man had no place to lay His head. Some commentaries claim that this proves Jesus could not have owned a house and was pretty much homeless. However, we must look at the context. While Matthew 8:20 is not as specific as to the timing, the parallel passage in Luke 9:58 is given in the context of when He was on a journey with His disciples and the Samaritans refused to grant them shelter (compare Luke 9:51–56; note verse 57: “NOW it happened as they journeyed on the road...”). There were times when Christ and His disciples did not encounter hospitality while they were on their missionary journeys, and it was that fact which Jesus stressed when He spoke about the sacrifices one must be willing to make when he or she wants to follow Christ (compare verses 57–58).

In this context, also note what Peter said of himself and the other apostles: “Then Peter answered and said to Him, ‘See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?’” (Matthew 19:27; compare Mark 10:28). Notice Jesus’ answer in Mark 10:29–30: “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.’”

However, we also know that Peter and many of the other apostles

JESUS BUILT AND OWNED HOUSES

There are numerous passages indicating that Jesus owned His own house—or perhaps even more than one. He grew up in Nazareth, but He later lived or “dwelt” in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13), “His own city” (Matthew 9:1). Luke makes this possible distinction when referring to Nazareth as the city where Jesus “had been brought up” (Luke 4:16). It appears that at some point in time, then, Jesus made His adult home in Capernaum. We read that when in Capernaum, Jesus would go into “THE” house, and that people would visit Him there when they found out that He was in the house (compare Matthew 13:1, 36).

Many commentaries say that this is a reference to Peter’s house in Capernaum, but it would be strange that in a few passages, it is specifically said that He entered “Peter’s house” (Matthew 8:14), while in most cases, it is only stated that He was in THE house. It was obviously a dwelling place that was well known to the people—they knew where to go when they heard that He was in THE house. The strong indication is that it was actually Christ’s house where He would live when He was dwelling in Capernaum and when He was not on a missionary journey.

For instance, in Mark 2:1, some commentaries feel that the phrase, “He was in the house,” should be rendered, according to the original Greek, as “He was at home,” which would strongly indicate that Christ either owned a house in Capernaum, or that He was renting one, still showing that this was “His home.”

Later, when Jesus went up from Capernaum to Nazareth, we read His words in Matthew 13:57, which could refer to His relatives and/or to visitors in His own house: “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country [or: hometown, compare *New American Standard Bible*] and in his own house.” And so, He did not do many works in His hometown where He had grown up, “because of their unbelief” (verse 58).

JOSEPH AND MARY NOT POOR

Some have claimed that Joseph and Mary were poor and could not afford to have and live in a house in Nazareth because Christ was born in a manger (Luke 2:7). But we must realize that Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem with Mary, who was pregnant, in order to be registered

time (compare Acts 21:23–24, 26–27). However, these vows ceased within the church when the temple was destroyed, as the purification ceremonies could not be carried out any longer.

It has been suggested that even though Jesus was not a Nazarite from birth, He made a temporary Nazarite vow from time to time. The Bible does not support this claim. In any event, Christ would not have been under a Nazarite vow at the time of His death; that is, He would not have worn long hair at that time. Note that at the end of the Nazarite vow, the Nazarite had to “shave his consecrated head” and burn his long hair, which had been cut off (verse 18). But as long as the Nazarite was subject to and under his vow, he could not drink any wine or even “any grape juice” (Number 6:4).

We know, however, that Jesus kept the last Passover with His disciples on the night when He was betrayed, and at that time, they all drank the Passover wine together (Matthew 26:27–29; Mark 14:23–25; Luke 22:17–18). Therefore, Christ could not have been under a Nazarite vow at that time, which means, He did not wear long hair at the time of His death.

Whatever the Shroud of Turin is and however it came into being, it is quite impossible to conclude that it contains an accurate portrayal of Jesus Christ.

After all, it was He — the Word of God — who inspired Paul to write that a man is not to wear long hair. For Paul, this fact was so self-evident that he asked his readers, “Does not even nature itself teach you” this truth? (1 Corinthians 11:14).

DON’T KNOW HIM AS A MAN

In any event, Paul tells us that we are not to “know” Christ “according to the flesh.” We read in 2 Corinthians 5:16 (*Phillips translation*): “... even though we knew Christ as a man, we do not know him like that any longer.”

It is dangerous to focus on images and pictures of Christ, including portrayals of Christ by actors in movies, and think that in some way those portrayals may accurately represent how Christ might have looked. We are to focus on Christ as He is now—a powerful Spirit being! To get a correct portrayal of Christ’s present appearance, please read Revelation 1:14–16. Christ has white hair, as white as wool or

snow, and His eyes are like flames of fire, while His face shines like the sun in full strength! THAT is the Jesus Christ of the Bible—God the Son—who is worthy of worship!

Chapter 9

Jesus Not a Homeless Vagabond

Sadly, many have a totally wrong concept as to how Jesus Christ lived when He was here on earth. They might have read Scriptures saying that even though He was rich, He became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9), not realizing that Paul is using a comparison between the richness of the immortal God who owns everything, and, in contrast, the poverty of man whose insignificant riches might be here today and gone tomorrow (compare Proverbs 23:4–5).

But Jesus Christ was by no means a vagabond or a hippie. Even though some claim, for instance, that He wore long hair, the Bible is very clear that He did not (compare 1 Corinthians 11:14), as we explained in chapter 8 of this booklet.

JESUS—FIRSTBORN SON OF A CARPENTER

He was the (step-)son of a carpenter—Joseph—and as Jewish custom of the time dictated, He would have been taught in Joseph's occupation and He would have continued in it after Joseph's death. (Joseph might have died sometime after the episode of the 12-year old Jesus in the temple, as he is not mentioned thereafter in Scripture as still being alive.)

The carpenter's occupation included that of an architect who would build houses. It is therefore very likely that Joseph built a house for himself and his family, and that Jesus, as the carpenter's son, would also have been engaged in building houses. It was customary for sons and daughters to remain in their parents' home until marriage, and as the firstborn son, He would have had the right and responsibility of inheriting the home and carrying on the family business that was operated from it. But it is also very likely that, as the firstborn son of a carpenter and having become a carpenter Himself, He would have built His own house or houses.