

Christology
The Doctrine of Jesus Christ

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
The Blue Letter Bible Institute

A ministry of
The Blue Letter Bible
www.blueletterbible.org

Christology

Table of Contents

Session 1	Introduction
Session 2	The Preexistence of Christ
Session 3	The Angel of the Lord
Session 4	The Messianic Claims of Christ
Session 5	The Deity of Christ
Session 6	The Abilities That Prove He Is God
Session 7	The Virgin Birth of Christ
Session 8	The Miracles of Christ
Session 9	The Death of Christ
Session 10	The Resurrection of Christ (Part 1)
Session 11	The Resurrection of Christ (Part 2)
Session 12	The Ascension and Present Ministry of Christ
Session 13	The Second Coming of Christ (Part 1)
Session 14	The Second Coming of Christ (Part 2)

Thank You that You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior into this world. Thank You that He died for our sins and paid for them and rose again from the dead. Thank You, Lord, that we have life and forgiveness in Him. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Thank You, Lord, for the wonderful inheritance we have in Christ. We are joint heirs with Him and we pray that our study of Your word concerning Jesus Christ will prepare our hearts to bring the message of Jesus to a lost and dying world. We pray, Lord, that we would never loose sight that Christianity is not just a religion—a system of doing things—but it is Jesus Christ our Lord. Without Christ there is no Christianity. Help us, Lord, by opening our minds and hearts. Make us diligent students of the Bible so that we would have an answer to give to those who ask us for a reason of the hope that is in us. We thank You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

The course description states that the purpose of this course is to present the person and work of Jesus Christ from His pre-existence to His Second Coming. Thus, acquainting the students with the major doctrines of Jesus Christ, while focusing on the centrality of Jesus Christ in all that Christianity teaches, believes, and practices. That is a wonderful course description and we will try to do that.

There is a little tract that is published by the Faith, Prayer and Tract League and its title is the same as the textbook: *The Incomparable Christ*. Let me read a few lines out of this that your heart might be warmed.

He came from the throne of the Father to the womb of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God. He was born in a supernatural way, lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He had neither wealth nor influence, yet the wisdom of men has never matched His wisdom. Never has a man spoken like this man. His family was inconspicuous and uninfluential. In infancy He startled a king. As a boy, He stunned theologians with His knowledge and wisdom for He was taught of God. In manhood, He ruled the elements and quieted the raging sea. He healed the multitudes without medicine. And fed thousands from a boy's lunch. Even demons obeyed Him and He gave back life to those who died. He never wrote a book, yet none of the libraries of the world can contain the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme of more songs than all song writers combined. He never founded a college, yet all the colleges together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never marshaled an army, yet no leader has ever had more volunteers. Great men have come and gone yet He lives all. Herod could not kill Him. Satan could not tempt Him to sin. Death could not destroy Him. The grave could not hold Him. He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant's gown. He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor. He slept in another's manger. He rode on another's donkey. He was buried in another's grave. He conquered death and rose on the third day as He said He would. He ascended into heaven and is now at the right

hand of the throne of God. One day He will return with power and great glory to judge the world when every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess Him as Lord. His friends gladly. But enemies seeking for a place to hide from His face. He is the perfect one. The only one who can satisfy the soul. He gives everlasting life to those who love Him. He is altogether lovely. But best of all, He is my Savior.

He is a wonderful Lord. Now God often gives us illustrations that are rather close to the times that we speak. Yesterday morning a Jewish medical doctor called me because somebody gave him my name. He had never heard our broadcast, but he called our ministry. He had just been talking with his rabbi about Jesus and wanted to know about Him. Though He had heard all about Jesus growing up, since it was in a Jewish home it was only to stay away from Jesus. Now he had become interested and somebody gave him a New Testament. While he was reading the New Testament, something about Jesus really bothered him. He went to his rabbi to find out the scoop about Jesus, but his rabbi gave him a lecture on why Jesus cannot be the Messiah. The funny thing about it is that he faxed the reasons to me and the rabbi gave the exact same arguments that I use to prove that Christ *is* the Messiah. The rabbi was not at all ignorant of the facts; he laid them out very beautifully for this man and told him that because of the curse on the line of David through Solomon at the time of Jeconiah Jesus cannot be the Messiah. Secondly, because He was born by virgin birth according to the New Testament, He would have come out of the womb of a woman (though she was in the line of David through Nathan) Christ could not have been the King of Kings because the messiah cannot be adopted. According to Psalm 132:11, He has to be born out of the loins of David—out of the woman's womb from King David through Solomon as this rabbi claimed. Now the Scriptures do not say that it must be through Solomon. He was born of a woman in David's line out of Mary. The rabbi was wrong concerning the adoption issue. We will

get to that one day when we talk about it in this course and go over the details of it. Here is a man telling me that Jesus was not the Messiah by using the very argument that we use to prove that He is the Messiah! The point is that both sides agree to the argument. Now I just looked at him and said, “Glory!” because I have now, in print, a Jewish rabbi stating exactly the argument as to why *Yeshua ben Yosef* is the only one who could ever be the Messiah. There is no other possibility.

In case, you are worried about that now, Isaiah 9:6 states, “For Unto us a Child is born.” Birth. “Unto us a Son is given.” Adoption. Whoever this one is, whose name is wonderful will be on the throne of David and He will be exercising righteousness and justice forevermore. Whoever this one is, He has to have both birth and adoption in order to fulfill Isaiah 9:6.

The other interesting thing—if the rabbi is correct—that he has eliminated any possibility for any Messiah, because nobody could be the Messiah. Why? Well, because He cannot meet the prophecies that are in the Bible. He listed the prophecies about Jesus and said they were coincidence. We will see in this course whether or not it is coincidence. Did the disciples sit down with Jesus one day and say, “You know what? I mean, you are nice looking. You’ve got a lot of great things to say. I think you’d make a great messiah. We certainly need one.” Now, we do have a little problem here. There are 300 prophecies that we are going to have to work on. Can you imagine the day that came along when they said, “I hate to tell you this, Jesus, but there are 30 prophecies that you have to fulfill in one day and you also have to be killed. There is one more that is even worse than that, because on the third day, you are going to have to come back from the dead.”

We will get back to this later in the course. We are getting a little bit ahead now. Allow me to run down the outline briefly so that you know what we are going to cover. We are actually going to deal with ten major subjects. Two weeks will be spent on most of these subjects.

1. Of the ten major subjects, the first one is the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. He did not just start as a baby in Bethlehem.

2. The second one that we will look at is the messianic claims of Jesus Christ. The fundamental issue of the Bible which a lot of schools do not at all teach their students, unfortunately, is that Jesus is the Messiah. As a matter of fact, to be accurate with the New Testament, a person becomes a Christian by believing that Jesus is in fact the Messiah. It says that point blank. It astounds me the little interest people have in the whole issue of the Messiah Himself. The claims of Jesus Christ to be the Messiah is the heart of the gospel. John wrote in John 20:30-31, “These signs are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that in believing you would have life through His name.” So it is critical to understand the messianic claims of Jesus Christ.

3. The third subject is the deity of Christ, and which will include a look at all the cults and aberrations of Christianity—everybody who is just a little off. They call themselves Christians, but they are just a slight bit off, and it is always over the deity of Christ. The deity of Christ functions as the common denominator of cults, whether they deny or water it down. The fact of the matter is that He is God. And we are going to deal with that.

4. We will address the incarnation and virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Incarnation means *God became flesh*. How that occurred? We will discuss the virgin birth—even addressing it genetically. We will also discuss the biological miracle involved in it. And hopefully all of us will

get a good, clear understanding of why that is an essential doctrine of the Bible about Jesus Christ.

5. We will look at the humanity of Jesus Christ. A very real subject. The Bible uses that to tell us He identifies with us. He is our merciful and faithful High Priest. He will comfort us. He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities in all points as the Bible says. We will look at the humanity of Jesus Christ.

6. We will look at the miracles of Jesus Christ. And since John 21:25 says that the books of the world cannot contain all those miracles, we obviously will not be talking about every one of them. But we will be showing you some of the key miracles of Jesus Christ. Especially as it relates to different veins of thought. For example, His power over demons, His power over the weather and sickness and illness. We are going to be looking at His mighty power.

7. We will address the death of Jesus Christ. No issue is more crucial to the gospel than understanding the death of Christ. We will be giving you about fifteen reasons why He died, and that will be a great time in the Lord.

8. We will also discuss the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And of course that, if the resurrection did not occur then we have a dead Savior—we have no Christianity, for we would remain in our sins and our preaching and teaching is a waste of time. Obviously the resurrection is crucial.

9. We will look at the ascension and present ministry of Jesus Christ. Rarely do you get in a lot of studies on Christ's present ministry in our life. It is almost as if people believe He ascended to

heaven and that He is not doing anything anymore until He comes back. Oh yes, He is very active and we will find out how and what He is doing.

10. Lastly, of course, is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Now we do have a course in eschatology that deals totally with prophecy, but we will be hitting some of the highlights only as it relates to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Now just a word about Jesus as we begin the first subject, the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. Let us take a moment and simply discuss His title and who we are talking about. The name Jesus in English comes off a Greek word *Iesous*. So basically it is not translated, it is said into English (transliterated). You also have it in other languages of the world. For instance, in Latin America and South America you have many people called Jesus. It is not just those letters and then title that is who we are talking about. We are speaking of a particular Jesus here.

Now, the Greek word, *Iesous*, which we get the name Jesus, comes off of a Hebrew word. And I want you to spell it with English letters so that you can get a hold of it. The word is often called *Yeshua*, which is an abbreviation that people use of His name. The real name is *Yehoshua*. Now that means “*Yahweh* is salvation” or “the Lord is salvation.” That is also the name of one of the books of the Old Testament: the Book of Joshua. We will mention how sometimes people can be confused on certain passages where it is talking about Joshua or whether it is talking about Jesus. His correct name is *Yehoshua*.

Now in the messianic circles of today, we abbreviate it and it is spelled: *Y'shua*. Now when you hear somebody say that Jesus is *Yeshua ben Abraham*, *Yeshua ben David*, or *Yeshua ben Joseph*. The word *ben* is placed to denote “son of.” So when people use that today, you know that they

are speaking of so and so is the son of so and so. That is how they are identified. The New Testament does the exact same thing.

Let us open up our New Testament and look at Matthew 1. It says the book of the generation of Jesus Christ. Now the word “Christ” in English is from the Greek word *christos*, which is a translation of the Hebrew word for Messiah. When we say, *ha Masheach*, the word *ha* is the definite article (*i.e.*, the word “the”). You will see people say *Yeshua ha Masheach*. In Irvine there is a messianic assembly at which I recently spoke on Jewish salvation, and the name of it is called *Adat ha Masheach*. So understand when we read right off of Matthew, that Matthew was a Jew. The book probably has a Hebrew source and has been translated into Greek so the whole world will hear the message of the gospel. It is the book of the generation of *Yehoshua ha Masheach*, Jesus the Messiah, or as we often say, “Jesus Christ.”

The next thing that Matthew states is “*ben David*,” the son of David. This immediately identifies Christ as the messianic King. *Yeshua ben David* is the Messiah King. It also said He is the son of Abraham.

So, here right away, the Bible uses a typical Hebrew or Jewish way of identifying who we are talking about and what the New Testament is all about. Here we have the book of the generation of *Yeshua ha Masheach* [Jesus the Messiah] *ben David* [the son of David] (the messianic King) and *ben Abraham* [the son of Abraham] (the promised seed).

We also know in this same chapter that He is the son of Joseph (*ben Yosef*). When you are communicating with Jewish people who are unfamiliar or do not want to agree with you about words like “Jesus Christ” and “Jesus is the Messiah,” the way to talk to them is to say, “I want to

“speak to you about *Yeshua ben Yosef* [Jesus son of Joseph].” Jews never say that a person is the son of a woman—they never say that—instead, they always list the man. That is why in the genealogies you see all these men. Now in Matthew 1:16, it says, *Yacov* [Jacob] (a very common Jewish name even today) begat *Yosef* [Joseph] (the husband of Mary). Now the next phrase, “of whom,” is a feminine pronoun that must agree in gender and number with its antecedent. Gender denotes whether it is masculine, feminine, or neuter. Number means either it is singular or plural. This is a feminine singular pronoun and it is highly unusual in any genealogy. Now the details of the Bible are very important. It is indicating that Jesus is not the natural son of Joseph. It says “Jacob begat Joseph.” You list the men in the line, and then it says that he is the husband of Mary of whom, feminine, singular pronoun was born *Yeshua* who was called *ha Masheach* [the Messiah].

This is a part of the simplicity of getting started and yet it can become complex if you are not careful. We often throw these things around. “Hey, do you believe in Jesus Christ?” “Well, I’m Jewish.” “Well, do you believe in Jesus Christ?” Now, what I would say to you about your witnessing is that it is lacking, but it is understandable. A lot of us are ignorant. We do not know what is really being said. The Jews do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, therefore do not begin evangelizing them by asking if they believe in Jesus Christ. You have to learn to communicate with people. The Bible communicates with us very carefully so that we know who it is that we are talking about.

Now according to this passage, (Matthew 1:21). He was given the name of *Yehoshua*. “She shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call His name Jesus.” Why? “For He shall save His people from their sins.” You see, it means, Yahweh is salvation. That is the meaning of *Yehoshua*—Yahweh is salvation. The *oshua* part we know from Hosanna. Remember when Jesus came in on Palm

Sunday? “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” Hosanna means “save us now.” It is a form of *oshua*, the salvation part of Jesus’ name. The little *ye* on the beginning of *Yehoshua*, is an abbreviation of the name of God, *Yahweh*, in English we say Jehovah (which is really from a Latin word). So *Yehoshua* means, “*Yahweh* is salvation.” That is the meaning of the name that was given to this one who is *ben David* [son of David] and *ben Abraham* [son of Abraham] and a son of Mary, but not born naturally as a son of *Yosef*, who became His father by adoption. After he married Mary, Joseph adopts Jesus as his own son.

Is everybody with me still? When did Jesus get the name *Yeshua*? Only here, when He comes into the world. So what was His name before that? And it is interesting even discussing that. The word *name* appears 800 times in the Old Testament. It is the word *shem*. Remember that Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japhath. Shem is the line of the Messiah—the line of the Jews and the Semites. The word *shem* means “name.” Therefore the Semites are the People of the name.

In Jerusalem there is a memorial to the Holocaust when six million Jews were killed by Hitler and his troops. The name of it is *Yod ha Shem*. *Yod*, meaning “monument” or “pillar.” So it is a monument to *ha Shem*, “the name.” It is really a monument to God and the survival of the Jewish people which He promised in His Word. There is quite a story behind that.

In the New Testament the word “name” is *onoma* and is used 200 times in the Bible. Now here is something interesting: not once does the word name, in reference to God or Jesus, ever appear in the plural. It is always in the singular, even when it mentions all three persons of the Godhead, like Matthew 28:19 which states, “Go and teach all nations in the name (singular) of the Father,

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” There it mentions all three persons but they only have one name.

When *we* say “name”, we mean the title we have that our parents gave us. When the Bible uses the word name, it refers to the character and attributes of that person (*i.e.*, who that person really is).

Now we are told in the New Testament as well as the Old, that our Lord has a name that is above every name. There is no name of anybody worth mentioning in the same sentence. His name is above every name. The Bible says in Acts 4:12, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” You know, some people when they are trying to cast out a demon say, “In the name of Jesus come out of him,” as if the only thing necessary is to mention the name Jesus. You know. Do you understand? We’re missing the point. We’re talking about the character and attributes and glory and majesty of this One who received the name *Yehoshua*. But there were other people who had the name *Yehoshua* as well. It simply means “Yahweh is salvation.”

So the name *Yehoshua*, when did that come? When was that given to Him? At His birth. Well, then what was His name previous? Isaiah says that His name was Wonderful. You call Him wonderful in the Old Testament. But the Hebrew word Wonderful, means “difficult to understand” or “incomprehensible.” So what are we talking about when we discuss the preexistence of Jesus Christ? We are talking about someone who has not yet received His name, *Yehoshua*, and whose name is beyond our ability to understand. That is really something important, yet we sometimes miss it.

Why is His name beyond our ability to understand? Now if you need to know the meaning of wonderful, you can check Psalm 139:1-6, where it speaks of God's knowledge being so great that before there is a word on our tongue, He knows it altogether. Before we say anything, He knows exactly what we were going to say. He knows the end from the beginning. And the Bible says in Psalm 139:6, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it." There is a clear definition of the word wonderful. It is greater than your ability to understand it. When it says in Isaiah 28:29, "His counsel is wonderful," and in Isaiah 9:6, "He is the wonderful counselor," it means that it is "too difficult to understand." He is the incomprehensible Christ!

You know this is the kind of class and teaching where along the way, you do not know whether to be quiet or to shout, "Glory!" You know I find it very difficult to talk about these things and not get really excited about praising the Lord. I do not know about you. We are talking about that name that is above every name—a name that is so wonderful. His ways are past finding out. "Oh the depth of the wisdom and the knowledge of God," the riches of that. It is incomprehensible. His greatness is too difficult to fathom. He calls all the stars by name. His sovereignty is so amazing that He rules over all—whatever is in the heaven and in the earth. He does whatever He pleases. He sustains all the physical laws of the universe so that when I let go of this book, it drops to the table. And my Lord is sustaining the laws of the universe.

He is incomprehensible. What you learn about the preexistence of Jesus Christ will accelerate your appreciation for the incarnation of Christ. In fact, you will begin to wonder how in the world it could have occurred, which we will cover when we get there.

How is it possible that this great God who is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, could localize His infinite presence that fills the universe? In fact, the heaven of heavens cannot even

contain Him. It is all within Him; He fills it all with His presence. Now how can He localize Himself in a human body enough to say that all the fullness of God dwelt in His physical body as Colossians 2:9 states?

In our discussions and teachings about Jesus Christ, we are sometimes too light. We are very superficial and do not think it through. The preexistence of Jesus Christ is an amazing subject about our Savior. This One whose name is wonderful (too difficult to understand), whom is called Yahweh Himself, never got the name *Yehoshua*, but He still was *Yehoshua* because He has always been salvation from the beginning to the end. “Look unto Me,” this Messiah says in Isaiah, “all the ends of the earth and be saved. For there is no other God besides Me. There is no other Savior.” He has always been *Yahweh-is-salvation*.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

People ask me, if there is any other way of being saved apart from Jesus? Is the grass green? Yes. What are you asking? Because the Bible is very clear. There is no other salvation. How did they get saved in the Old Testament? Typical Gentile question. Do you think any Jewish person who never heard the name was excluded from the salvation, which He who is above every name and has always existed provided at any age under any time? Do you understand what people are saying? How was Abraham saved? I expect to see him in heaven. Along with Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, David, Solomon and all the rest. They are going to be in heaven, but how did they get there? Though they never saw the earthly Jesus, you should never doubt for a minute that He whom we are discussing has always been there. There was no other way. God told Abraham, “In

thee all nations of the world will be blessed.” “In thy seed,” Abraham, and Galatians reminds us, that it is not many seeds. We are not talking about all the Jewish people being your saviors. It is only one Jewish person; the seed of Abraham will bring salvation to the entire world. Everybody will come the same way. The Lord is salvation and there is no other way. The Lord is the only one who can save you. No one else can. And if you existed before He became a baby, you still had to call upon Him in order to be saved.

Did you know that every statement in the New Testament about what you are supposed to do is based on the Old Testament? There simply is not anything new. You say, the Bible says whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Well, that is how they got saved in the Old Testament. In fact, that is a quotation from the Old Testament.

It is interesting to me how we think. No one in any age will ever be saved apart from *Yahweh* who is salvation. That name was given to Him because that is who He is. They did not say, “Let’s flip a coin. Shall we call Him Abraham? Jacob? David?” No, we can only call Him one thing. We can only call Him *Yehoshua*. It is the only thing we could call Him, because He is *Yahweh*, who alone is salvation. It is the only thing we can call Him. We can tell people also that He is *ha Masheach*, the Messiah that God has been talking about all the way through the Bible. He is the redeemer, and this is exciting stuff!

Turn to the first chapter of the Gospel of John. Under the preexistence of Jesus Christ, we are going to study five subjects. The first of which is His position over all creation. The second subject is His power to create all things. The third subject will be His providence in controlling all things. The fourth subject is His presence in Old Testament times. There is actually quite a bit involved with that. Finally, we will look at His preeminence over all things.

The first topic pertaining to the preexistence of Jesus Christ is His position over all creation. The apostle John lived longer than the apostles and took care of the mother of Jesus. In fact, both of their tombs are in the same place: the city of Ephesus. John the Apostle was in exile on the Isle of Patmos, then was released back to Ephesus where he died and was buried. Mary was buried there many years before, but she would have had a lot of interesting conversations with John about Jesus. Ninety percent of John is not found in Matthew, Mark or Luke because John primarily focuses on Christ's deity and gives us quite a bit of information around the final week, which the others do not.

Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptic gospels. *Optic* means "eye." *Syn* means "with." It is to look with the eye as though you are surveying the whole thing. As you look at Matthew, Mark, and Luke you are looking at the gospel from different perspectives. Matthew looks at it from the perspective that Christ is king; Mark, Christ as a servant; and Luke, Christ as the Son of Man. Technically, John's Gospel is set aside.

First of all, John's Gospel is set apart from the other Gospels by time because the Gospel of John was written probably 60 years after the time of Christ. So there is a lot a time that goes by. Plus, John knew Christ better than any of the others. He leaned on His breast at the Last Supper and was the one to whom Christ committed the care of His mother. John was also known as the theologian of the early church—not Paul (which is sort of surprising). The early church fathers spoke of John as the theologian because he talked in theological terms. He likes to teach by contrast, which is a bit different than Paul who is a teacher's delight because he gives reasons and causes and purposes and outlines it all very well. Therefore a lot of preachers like to preach the Epistles of Paul. They are much more easier to put together. John's are a little tougher. He teaches by contrast, which is very Jewish (the same way in which the Proverbs are organized: "The way of the wicked is like this; the way of the fool is like that.").

For instance, the familiar contrasts of John are light and darkness. His epistles reveal the same thing. First John 1:5 says, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." He does the same thing in the opening chapter as he discusses who *Yeshua ha Masheach* is. Who is this one? He is going to do it by contrasts. Another great contrast in John's writings is life and death, or love and hate ("He who hates his brother, does not love Him....") There is also the contrast between sin and righteousness.

Interestingly you will find more words in John using the term, "believe" than any other book. Actually, the purpose of John is that you really believe who He is, for that is what is critical to the entire argument.

The Gospel of John begins very differently than the other three Gospels. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with

God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life.” Notice the relationship with all those terms of contrast which are often blended together in comparisons. “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” When John says, light and darkness, light represents life and darkness represents death. Light and life represent righteousness. Death and dark represent sin. There is a connection in all these contrasts that he used.

“In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not,” or did not overpower it. For it had no power to squelch it. “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.” This, of course, refers to John the Baptist. “The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light.”

Now we know that the light and the life and the Word all refer to a person. “That all men through Him might believe. He was not that light.” That is, John the Baptist was not that light. But he was sent to bear witness of that light, Christ. That was the true light that lighteth every man that come into the world. How is a man enlightened? How do the lights get turned on in a person’s life, whether he is a believer or not? John 1:4 yields the answer. “In Him was life.” There are certainly two kinds of life: physical and spiritual. All men have the light of God in them when they come in the world because they all have life from God. “The breath of the Almighty has given my life.”

In Genesis 2:7, when God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life, the Hebrew word is plural. Literally meaning, “the breath of lives.” Now there are two kinds of life that God breathed into man: physical and spiritual. When God said to Adam, “In the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall surely die,” we know in the Bible’s account that Adam did

not physically die that day, but he did spiritually die. That is why you can write to people who are physically alive and say, “You are dead in your trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).

Is everybody still with me? This is really heavy stuff. It is simple, but heavy. Yet that is typical John for you. When you learn Greek, the first book you will translate is 1 John because the words are so simple, however, trying to understand the theology is very heavy. Every man has physical life, but look at this:

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (John 1:10-11)

This refers to the Jewish people.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power [*exousia*] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 12-13)

Then John takes us right back to verse 1 by saying, “And the Word” because John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word.” The Greek word is *logos*, which is used in English all the time. This course is called *Christology*. It has the word *logos* in it. The study, or the word about Christ. There is also *archaeology*, the study of archae or “old things.”

“The Word [this *logos*] was made flesh.” Notice that it did not say, “the Word was made flesh dwelt among us. We beheld His glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.” Well let me tell you something. We just got a barrage of theological problems sent to us in a very simple verse.

First, in verse 14 when it says “the Word was made flesh,” some translations say, “the Word was flesh.” The Greek word is *ginomai*, which means “to become.” It means a change of condition. It assumes a previous existence. Listen carefully to me, class. The preexistence of Jesus Christ is taught in John 1:14 when it says, “the Word became flesh.”

Does it say that back in John 1:1 when it says, the Word was God? That He became God? No. It does not. It says He was God, and there is a big difference. In John 1:14, however, this Word, “became flesh,” which means that He was in existence before He became flesh and that He was not flesh before He became it. So what was He before He became flesh?

John 4:24 says, “God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.” He is first spirit, then He becomes flesh, but He is described as being the Word, the revelation of God. Whatever God is, the Word, the declaration of that is what Jesus is. Is Jesus a revelation of the invisible God? Absolutely.

The first point that I am talking about right now, is His position over all creation. Under that, I want you to see three things. There are three things under the subject of His position is over all creation. First, He is the revelation of the invisible God. Look down at John 1:18, “No man hath seen God at any time.” He is invisible. He is the only begotten (there is that term again). You say, “What does that mean?” Hang on, because I will tell you in a minute. “The only begotten Son

which is in the bosom of the Father.” That is an interesting statement. “He hath declared Him.”

The word declare means “to manifest,” or “to let it be known,” or “to reveal,” as we would say in English. He is revealed Him. The first thing that we say as we look at His position over all creation, is that He is the revelation of the invisible God.

Paul gives his testimony and tells how Jesus Christ chose him to show longsuffering and a pattern for those who would believe in 1 Timothy 1. Then he says:

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise
God, [be] honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1
Timothy 1:17)

That is a testimony to Jesus’ deity, by the way, but He is called invisible.

By faith he [Moses] forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the
king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (Hebrews
11:27)

One of the reasons that Jesus came into this world was to show us what God is like, because God is invisible. With your physical eyes you cannot see God. With the eyes of faith you can see a lot about God, and one day God is going to give you the privilege of looking on the face of His incarnate Son. Revelation 22 tells us that we will see His face. He is the invisible God. The word “invisible,” is used five times of Him in the Bible.

Turn to Colossians 1. What are we talking about? He is the revelation of the invisible God. He reveals who God is.

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things [preexistence], and by him all things consist [They hold together]. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. (Colossians 1:15-19)

That is an incredible passage. Every image is a likeness, but every likeness is not an image. An image is an exact reproduction. If you see two twins, you would say that they look alike, but one is not the image of the other. Why is a son in the image of his father? When Adam begat sons in Genesis 5 it says they were in the image of Adam. This is genetically true. Your DNA is in the image of your parents. Let me say it again. Every image is a likeness, but not every likeness is an image.

In the case of Jesus, “He is the image of the invisible God.” He is the revelation of the invisible God, but, number two, He is a complete representation of the invisible God.

In John 14:8-9, Philip said, “Show us the Father and it sufficeth us.” In other words, “We’ll be happy if you just show us the Father.” What an audacious, arrogant statement that was. Jesus turned to Philip and said, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father.” He is the complete representation of the invisible God.

In Hebrews 1:3, another very important passage, it says of Him, “Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.” The New American Standard Bible translates it as “exact reproduction.”

Let me give you an example. If I had some clay up here and I had an instrument like a stamp. If I pushed the stamp into the clay and pulled it out, what is left is the image. It is the exact reproduction. It was the exact thing that was implanted in that. Now, if I have a piece of paper and try to just draw out of my mind what that image looks like, my drawing is a likeness, but it is not the image. The image was planted in the clay. Jesus Christ is not simply a likeness, but the image of the invisible God. That is quite a statement.

The third thing I would mention under His position over all creation, is that He is the special reason for the creation. Imagine creating it all for yourself. That is exactly what God did. You see, Colossians 1 tells you that. Have you ever asked yourself, “Why did God make us?” You can ask a lot of why questions. “Why did God make us?” Some people say, “Well, He needed somebody to love.” No, He did not. The Father loved the Son. You are no improvement. Thank God He does love us, but that is not the reason He made you. “Well, He needed fellowship. He was lonely.” No, He was not. The Father fellowshiped with the Son, and the Son with the Father, and the Spirit with the Son. What is the big deal here? Well then why did He make us? To glorify Himself. He did it because He wanted to. That is the only reason I exist. To glorify God.

That is why the Westminster Catechism asked, “What is the chief end of man?” Its answer: “To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” This is the reason.

Colossians 1:15 says, “He is the firstborn of every creation.” The word “firstborn” is the word *prototokos* in Greek, and is used nine times in the New Testament. Now when you read “firstborn,” what do you think? You think it is the one born first, right? You say, “I am a firstborn son. I was the first child my parents had.” That is not the meaning of *prototokos*. Let me give you an example. In Romans 8:29, Jesus Christ is called “the firstborn among all the believers.” Well, He was not the first one born from a standpoint of time. All of this in this room have been born after He was. It has to mean something more than that. Today’s class is preparing you for those guys who come by your house wearing white shirts and ties and riding bicycles. In case you did not know. Hebrews 1:6 says, “Again when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world.” It is literally “firstborn,” *prototokos*. He says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” This is certainly an unusual firstborn child. How many of you are firstborn? Well, then you obviously want to be worshipped. How many of you are not firstborn child? Do we want to worship them? No way.

It does not refer to the one who was born first. *Prototokos* is talking about the position. That is why this whole point is called “His position over all creation.” He is the firstborn of all creation. He is the pre-eminent one. He is the priority. No one takes His place, and that is why God says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” The Bible says that He who is the head of the church is the firstborn. No one deserves to be mentioned in the same breath.

Now in Revelation 22:8-9, the angel that was bringing God’s message, acting as an emissary or a servant boy for God. John is so excited that he falls down at the feet of the angel. The angel stops

him and says “No, no, no, no. Worship God alone.” But wait a minute. In Hebrews 1:6, it says of the firstborn that the Father brought into the world, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”

There is only one conclusion. He is God, because otherwise He cannot be the firstborn over all creation. The only one who designed everything to praise Himself, the only one who designed all to glorify Himself, was God. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” If He is God, I understand this. If He is not God, the whole thing is crazy, and it does not make any sense at all.

It is another testimony—another way of looking at the testimony of the Bible to the deity of Jesus Christ. He is the firstborn over all creation.

What have we learned about His position over creation? He is the revelation of the invisible God. He declares, shows, and reveals who God is, because God is invisible. He became visible to show us what God is like. Second, He is the complete representation of the invisible God. You do not need to say, “Well you know, I did look at Jesus, but I’m kind of into Mohammed and Maimonides and a lot of other people. I would like to see all the aspects of who God might be.” No! You have the wrong message. The message of the Bible is that when you come to Jesus, you have arrived. There is nothing else to learn. “All the fullness of God dwells in Him.” “In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). Do you understand?

How stupid are all the churches that do not speak of Jesus. There is a church group that said this to me that, “Well, we worship the Father. That’s the only one you’re supposed to worship and we believe it’s blasphemy to worship the Son.” No, it is not. The Father told you to do that.

Every father understands this. When you honor the son, you honor the father. People ask, “Can you honor Jesus too much and ignore the Father?” No way. He who has seen the Father sees it in Jesus. This is a problem. Is Jesus the Father? No. He is the exact representation of Him. You say, “My head hurts. It’s lunch. It’s going to get worse. We’re just warming up. It’s the first day. I want to go into underwater basket weaving. I don’t want to study this. I want something simple, man. I want to preach the gospel but I just don’t want to study and think.”

This brings us to the second subject under preexistence. It is not only His position over all creation, but His power to create all things. Again in Colossians 1:16 it says, “For by Him were all things created.”

“How many things were created by Jesus Christ?”

“All things.”

You say, “Oh well what about the galaxies?”

“It says ‘in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible.’”

“What about demons?”

“He did that too.”

“What about the angels?”

“He created all the angels too.”

“Jesus?”

“Yeah. He’s not the brother of Michael, or the brother of Satan which is the worse argument, or that He is Michael the archangel. No, He created the angels. All principalities and powers. Everything that you have ever seen or cannot see was created by Him.”

Colossians 1:16 says, “All things were created by Him.” The Greek word is *dia*, meaning “through His agency.” Romans 11:36 says, “For from Him, out of Him, and through Him and unto Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.” Everything comes from His creative hand, and it exists because He made it. All things are being worked after His own power. He is sustaining it all, and all things have their ultimate objective to glorify Him and praise Him. He is the God of all things. Everything that He made are not only made “by Him,” but they are also “for Him.” You were made for Jesus. I like that. You will never be complete, fulfilled, satisfied until you understand that your sufficiency is of Christ. You do not need anything else.

I get amused. Pastors all the time get mail from people who are offering things. Our radio ministry gets tons of stuff like that. It is just amazing to me. Everybody believes that you are not quite what you should be. They got something that will help you be what God wants you to be. Now that is the basic marketing strategy of most things that are Christian. “You need to attend our seminar or seminary in order to be the most fulfilled person. All of your dreams, ambitions, and your meaning and purpose in life can really be clarified in our special video series. It is only \$29.95. And if you will send for your prayer hanky we will...”—on and on it goes. You know, I look at all this stuff and I say, “You know the whole marketing principle is wrong. The strategy is

all wrong, because I already got everything in Jesus Christ my Lord.” If you want to help me know more about Him, I would be interested in talking to you, but I am not interested in anything else because nothing is missing.

The other day a man asked me after church, “Have you received the second blessing?”

I said, “Yes sir.”

“Oh, praise the Lord.”

Then I said, “And the third and the fourth and the fifth.”

He said, “Oh no.”

I said, “Oh yes. Ephesians 1 says that I have been blessed with all blessings in Jesus Christ my Lord.”

I have got everything. I have it all. It is amazing. By the time we are done with this course, if you do not love Jesus, then I have failed. This is the most wonderful person you have ever known in your entire life. He is that God that made you. He is the God who wants you. He loves you. He wants you to glorify Him, and He will fulfill your deepest needs. You can say it. It is okay.

In John 1:3, just to back it up, it speaks of His power to create all things. It says, “All things were made by Him.” Listen to this one: “Without Him was not anything made that was made.” Well, how was it all made? Go back to Hebrews 11 and it tells you, “Through faith we understand that

the world were framed by the word of God” (Hebrews 11:3). It is another statement of His deity. Connect the passages. How did all things come into existence? By the word of God. He simply said it. In Genesis 1 you read multiple times, “God said, Let there be light.” “God said, let the trees breathe.” “God said, let there be light and an ocean and all that.” God just has to say the word. And there it is.

The worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. I see this glass. Here is another glass. I will bet this was created from this. No, the Bible says that whatever came into existence, was not made from what it appears. Whatever you see in the physical, material universe had nothing to do with created the physical and material universe. Now that is not the way evolution! That is what we call creation *ex nihilo*, which is simply Latin for “out of nothing.” In the beginning God created. The Hebrew word is *barah*. There was nothing. Evolutionists, even when they honor God, like theistic evolutionists do in certain Christian schools, are denying a clear statement of the Bible, that somehow God created the first thing and the process, but then it develops and becomes all of this. No! That is wrong.

I remember sitting in a class one day as they were trying to explain to me about why the sun, moon and stars only appeared on the fourth day. They could not have been created on the fourth day. I am listening to it. Their reason for that, is that we have to have the sun and stars to have the vegetation on the third day. Here you have got vegetation. You have trees bearing fruit on the third day of creation, but you do not have the sun, moon and stars until the fourth day. They were doing a number about it. They felt the sun, moon and stars just appeared. There was some sort of foggy up in the ozone or whatever, you know. So it just appeared then. But they had to be in existence or you could not have the plant life. We all know that. Really? They said they just appeared. Yet God said He made them and put them in the sky on the fourth day. I am sitting here

listening to this. Earlier he said the dry land appeared. So if he wanted to say the sun, moon and stars appeared, why did he not use the same word? Why did he say he made them on the fourth day? Why did he not just say they appeared on the fourth day and we would all be happy? The reason being is because He made them on the fourth day. They were not in existence in Genesis 1:1, when he said, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” No, it did not include the sun, moon and stars. People say, “Wait a minute. You have to have light in order to have vegetation because they are in their adult mature forms and if he planted the seeds, they would have to grow.” No, that is not what the Bible says. The Bible says, “The first day He said, ‘Let there be light.’ And there was light.” We do not need the sun, moon and stars for light. In the eternal city, the New Jerusalem in Revelation we will no longer have the sun, moon and stars for the Lord God will be all the light we need. There will be no night there, that is what I call light! People say, “Wait a minute. Light travels at 186,000 miles a second, it would have to go through space, and it would take 24 billion years to arrive at this planet.” Oh I do not think so at all. When God said, “Let there be light,” He diffused light in the whole system at once. “Well, that would be a miracle.” That is true.

My blessed Lord Jesus Christ is the one who did it. All things were made by Him. It was His word and nothing that I see came out of previously existing materials. It was all *ex nihilo*, created out of nothing by my Lord.

When He did not create something out of nothing, He said so, but whatever He created the next thing out of He created first to start with. You say, “What are you talking about?” Well, take man’s body for example. He formed man’s body out of the dust of the ground, but He had already created the chemical elements of the dust. That is why when you die, your spirit leaves you, and you, in fact, return to the dust. Your body decays. Why? Because you are nothing but dirt. Amen.

Might as well look at each other right now and say, “Do you know you are nothing but dirt? But God loves you anyway.”

The Bible says that the Father pities His children (Psalm 103:14), because He is ever mindful that we are nothing but dust. That is chemically true. These chemical elements that are in the body that forms the body, where did they come from? From the soil.

“Who made the soil and those chemical elements?”

“God did.”

“What did He use to make it?”

“Nothing.”

“How can you explain that?”

“Through faith.”

“Oh, we are just supposed to believe it?”

“Yes, because God said so.”

“Well, that’s in the Bible. It was written by men.”

The third issue is His providence in controlling all things. This one who came into the world as a baby in Bethlehem had been around through all the ages of time. He is working continually. As a matter of fact, He is controlling all things in the universe.

In Colossians 1:17 it says, “By Him all things consist.” They hold together. Why do the world’s not clash? How do you explain orbiting of the planets? What is going on here?

In Hebrews 1:3, we read, “Upholding all things by the word of His power.” You know one day that the Lord is going to let it all crash. The stars in the heaven will fall. The elements of the earth will melt and the whole thing is going to be blown sky high. Why is that going to happen?

Because He will not hold it together anymore by His word. But by His word, He will destroy it with fire. He will cause the most gigantic explosion the world has ever seen. There is no movie theater that could possibly create in our minds the explosion that is going to happen. Words are used of thermonuclear destruction are in 2 Peter 3. The whole place is going to be blown sky high. Do not get real excited about Earth Day.

He sustains all the laws of the universe by His own power. He has been working night and day. The idea that He is taking a nap since Creation, because it said, “He rested,” is wrong. He just ceased from His work of creation. He does not cease from His work of providence. He is still controlling. Providence means the control of all things. There is not anything that our Savior is not controlling, and has been long before He became a baby in Bethlehem.

The next subject is heavy duty: His presence in Old Testament times. We are not going to get into that, but I am simply going to tell you what we are going to study. First, we are going to study the

uniqueness of the Angel of the Lord. We are going to tell you that we believe the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is nothing but the pre-existent Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we are going to discuss the understanding of the term, “Lord of Hosts” (Lord of Armies), which is used 236 times in the Bible. We are going to show you that the Lord of Hosts is none other than our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, before He ever became a baby in Bethlehem.

We will also take a look at the use of plural pronouns in the Old Testament concerning the person of God. We will discuss the unity of New Testament writers as they discuss the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Father and His work previous to becoming a baby in Bethlehem.

Father, thank You for Your many blessings. Thank You for Your Word. Help us, Lord, as we study the person of Jesus Christ to once again fall in love with Him, to commit our lives to Him, to do what He wants, to reflect His glory. Help us to constantly praise Him. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

You are dismissed.

We are speaking about our first subject, the preexistence of Jesus Christ. We talked about His position over all creation. He is the revelation of the invisible God. He is the complete representation of the invisible God. He is the special reason for the creation. He is the firstborn, which does not mean that He was born first. It is not the standpoint of time as is clear in the Bible. But *prototokos* is used nine times as referring to His uniqueness, or His specialness. The fact is that all creation was designed for Him. He is above it all. We talked about His power to create all things. “All things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made.” We talked about His providence in controlling everything. “He upholds all things by the word of His power” Hebrews 1:3. He is sustaining all the laws of the universe (Colossians 1:17).

We have now come to His presence in Old Testament times. We talked a lot about the importance of the word “name.” His name is above every name. We mentioned that even though you will see in books, the names of God (like *Jehovah Rapha* or *El Shaddai*), these are not really names like we use that word in English. They are not really titles. They speak of the character and attributes and activity of God. God said His name was *Yahweh* or the Tetragrammaton (four letters that express who God is). There are many qualities and attributes of Him. The word name is used 800 times in the Old Testament, and 200 in the New. It never occurs in the plural, but is always in the singular. We are going to talk about the fact that *Yeshua ben Josef* (Jesus son of Joseph), who came into this world as a baby in Bethlehem, had always existed. He did not begin His existence when He became a baby in Bethlehem, or when He was conceived in the womb of Mary. He is the eternal Son of God and we are going to look into that wonderful teaching in the *Tenach* (the Old Testament) today. I hope it will be a blessing to you.

Take your Bibles and turn to Psalm 34. In dealing with the presence of the Messiah in the Old Testament, we are going to deal with four things. There is evidence that God is more than one (he exists as Father, Son and Spirit). We are going to look at, first of all, a wonderful subject, the Angel of the Lord. The Hebrew term is *Malach Yahweh*. Now *malach* can also be translated messenger.

Watch out when you read “angel” that your mind does not immediately go to somebody that looks more like a woman than a man, has wings, and looks rather sweet and angelic. Not that they could not look that way, but I just doubt seriously that they do. They are not women. They are sexless, but I do not want to make a big deal over that. A lot of people sure do. They definitely are not like those cute little cherubs that we have all over our Victorian houses. But, you know, those are cute too. Let us not ruin everybody’s life.

Anyway, we are going to talk about the Angel of the Lord. A *malach* is simply a messenger—one who is sent on a mission. It is interesting if you put it into Greek, you would get *apostolô*, which you have the word “to send” or “apostle” in English. It is just said from the word. An apostle is one who is sent. In some respects it can be an angel, or, in other words, a messenger. Is there a unique group of beings that God has created whom we normally refer to as angels? Yes, of course. Cherubim, seraphim, and some of the ranks and orders of those angels. There is one angel mentioned as the archangel. That is Michael the Archangel. No, that is not Jesus Christ in case you have heard a lot of Jehovah’s Witness talk. Michael bows the knee to Jesus Christ. There is a book in secular bookstores that, oh its beautiful, which talks about the seven angels of God. It is really gorgeous, and they are all named there. Excuse me. There are a lot more angels. It says the seven archangels. That comes from Jewish Talmudic literature. There is only one archangel

according to the Bible. Some of the fantasy teaching that is in the Talmud as well as in other writings, comes up with more archangels. They think that Gabriel, meaning strength of God, is an archangel. The Bible never says he is. Michael is called the archangel, which pretty well settles it. He is not an, or one of, he is the archangel. There is the angel also over the demons as well, and his name is Satan.

In looking at this, I was down at Mother's Kitchen in Newport Beach, which is a health and nutritional type place. It is kind of a little occultic and New Age too. I came in and there was this gigantic display of angels right in the doorway. There was a big sign and all these cute little cherubs around. There were books all over the place on angels, and featuring was this beautiful multi-colored, Seven Archangels of God. So I opened it up and I looked at it and so forth. I told the attendant at the counter, "Is the manager available."

She said, "Why?"

I said, "There is a really big problem over here at this table."

So the manager came out, and he said, "What's the problem?"

I said, "This book, it's not right."

He said, "It's not right?"

I said, "No. It says there are seven archangels. There is only one. They've got seven in here."

Here, look for yourself.”

He looked at me and thought, “What’s going on?”

And I said, “Besides, the best book on angels you don’t even have here.”

He said, “Really? What one’s that?”

“A book by Billy Graham. Ever heard of him? He wrote on angels. You need that book here. I’d put it right in the center if I were you. Kind of feature it. By the way, he has a lot of other good books too. He has a little simple one called, *Peace with God*. We all need peace, don’t we?”

“Well, yeah.” Now, he is realizing, “I have a real serious weirdo here.”

Well there are not seven archangels. There is only one, and Jesus is not an angel. The cults are going to use what I am now going to teach you in exactly the opposite way to prove that He is nothing but an exalted angel of God. That is how they do it.

In Psalm 34:7, just to show you some of the blessing of this, it says, “the angel (the *hamalach*) of the Lord (*Yahweh*) encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth him (or them).” We have one angel called the Angel of the Lord encamping around everybody who fears Him, because He uses the plural. He delivers them. So whoever this one angel is, He is either moving real quick from person to person, or He has the ability to be in more places at once than anyone else can be.

In Psalm 35:5-6 it says, “Let them be as chaff [talking about the wicked] before the wind and let the Angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery and let the Angel of the Lord persecute them.” Why would David be referring to that? Because in past Jewish history, before David’s time, there is biblical record about the power and greatness of the Angel of the Lord.

Turn to Zechariah, to see how one of the later prophets proves that the Bible is consistent on this subject. In 12:8 it says, “In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” This is talking about the Battle of Armeggedon. “In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David. And the house of God shall be as God as the Angel of the Lord before them.” You see, that phrase will remind the Jews how the Angel of the Lord led them, even in the wilderness. How he fought for them. How he defeated their enemies, and now at the Battle of Armeggedon the prayer is, or the statement is that the Lord will defend them. Even the most feeble Jew is going to be like the Angel of the Lord. They will be supernaturally empowered to defend themselves against all the attacks against them. All the nations will be against them. In fact, verse 9 says that God will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

The Angel of the Lord appears fifty-nine times, however, the actual Hebrew words *malach Yahweh* appear only fifty-seven of those times. I know it is two times to quibble about. You also have the term the Angel of God appearing six times.

Now, we are going to give you seven examples, and hopefully these examples will demonstrate to you who the *Malach Yahweh* (the Angel of the Lord) really is. Let us go first of all to Abraham in

Genesis 22. Believe me, folks, you need to get this material down. The cultists will really do a number against people with all these passages showing that Jesus is not what we say He is.

In Genesis 22:11, Abraham is ready to stretch forth his hand and kill his son, Isaac. You say, “How can he do that?” Because Hebrews 11 tells us that the promise of God was through Isaac and Abraham had believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, he actually believed that God, if he wanted to kill him, would raise him immediately from the dead. He knew that, because he did not have any baby yet, so he knew that according to God’s promise Isaac would also have a son. He knew that God would have to raise him from the dead. He was willing to kill that boy. It shows a great faith of Abraham who said that he did not waver through unbelief but grew strong in the promise of God. He was fully persuaded that what God had promised, He would perform. Hebrews 11 points out that it was all a type and a picture of the death and resurrection of our Savior.

But anyway, in Genesis 22:11, it mentions the Angel of the Lord. Now many times it says, “an angel.” It is not significant in Greek as it is in Hebrew. Let me explain. This is not referring always to a definite article, but it does in this context. I will show you why. In Greek, if I said, “THE Angel of the Lord,” it does not necessarily mean that he is the only one. He could be the angel that we are talking about out of a group of angels. The definite article in Greek specifies or identifies that noun. In Greek it is not as significant. That is why many times it is just a normal angel when it says the angel of the Lord opened the door and Peter went out and so forth.

In the Old Testament, when you put the definite article in front of it, it is the one and only one Angel of the Lord. If it says just an angel or it uses the plural, then you know it is another one of the created beings. The definite article is a very important point.

And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here [am] I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son] from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind [him] a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said [to] this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. (Genesis 22:11-14)

The Lamb was provided for our sins. Anyway, now look at 22:15.

And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. (Genesis 22:15)

Do not miss this text and the details of it. The Angel of the Lord did the calling. It was the second time, which means, the first one we read was the Angel of the Lord.

And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand

which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate
of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth
be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:16)

Who is this one? First of all, only one according to the Bible, can swear by himself. There is a beautiful argument on that in Hebrews 6:13-20 (about the promise of God). He does not need to swear by anything else, because there is not anything else. By an *a priori* argument, He is the Creator. He swore by Himself, and so His own character that He will not change, and His word says, “I change not,” Malachi 3:6. What you have here is a powerful statement to the deity of the Angel of the Lord. He is actually claiming to be *Yahweh*. “By Myself I have sworn, saith *Yahweh*. “And you have not withheld your son and you have obeyed My voice.” This is an incredible testimony to the identity of the *Malach Yahweh*. The Angel of the Lord is the messenger that God the Father would send into this world. He was working actively in Old Testament times long before He became a baby in Bethlehem.

Let us now go to the case of Moses in Exodus 3. If you are Jewish, then there are a couple of heavy duty names that you just do not treat lightly ever (Abraham, King David, and Moses). Moses was a great law giver. We do not fool around with Moses. Moses was the one God used to give us the *Torah*, which is basically, or uniquely, the first five books of the Bible, but can also refer to the entire *Tenach*. It can also refer to just the Ten Commandments. It has a lot of applications. *Torah* can refer to any commandment. I think this is stretching it a bit, but if you were raised in a Jewish home and your mother did not like what you were doing and she wanted to do something else, she would shout at you, “It’s a mitzvah!” The word mitzvah means commandment. So, you see what she wants to do is put a little authority behind what she is

asking you to do. She knows it is not in the Bible. She does not have a verse to prove her point, but it is a mitzvah. That means you do what your momma wants.

What we have here, in fact, is the authority of God Himself coming out through this Angel of the Lord. To Moses He is the author of the *Torah*, the first five books which continually tell us about *Yahweh*'s voice, speaking, commanding, telling us things. When you read something out of that life of Moses, it carries a certain impact to a Jewish heart that is not always that obvious to some of us. In Exodus 3:1, we learn that Moses, after he fled Egypt, kept the flock of Jethro (his father-in-law and the priest of Midian). He led the flock to the back side of the desert, came to the Mountain of God, and even to Horeb. How could Moses lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and come right to Mount Sinai? Because he had been there before. He had spent 40 years on the back side of the desert. He knew it like the back of his hand, and it was no problem at all. I can see Moses in the desert yelling at them, "No, not that way. Over here. I've been here before. Follow me." Now, I may have added a little to the word of God there, but we do know that when Moses complained to God that is exactly what he said. "These people, they are so rebellious. They don't follow me. They don't do what I tell them." I can see him chasing down sheep and goats and putting them away. "We have to go through that little crevice right over there. I know what I'm doing. Follow me now." It was really frustrating, but he had been there before. He knew the area quite well, because something happened at the foot of that mountain that changed his life.

He was a talented, and very eloquent speaker, though he tried to tell God that he was not, which was kind of stupid. He was trained in all the educational advantages of ancient Egypt (Acts 7:22 tells us that). He knew all their wisdom and could speak eloquently, but when he started to complain to God he said, "Oh I am slow of speech and tongue." That is when God "got ticked" (My translation). God really became upset with him for that one. "Who do you think I am? Do I

not know whether you can speak or not?” God was so mad at him that he judged him and told him that Aaron would do all talking. I feel sorry for Aaron, because he never really came up with anything original in his life. The poor guy. Can you imagine going into Pharaoh? God would not let Moses talk directly to Pharaoh. Moses always had to tell Aaron what to say to Pharaoh.

“Tell Pharaoh, ‘Let my people go.’”

Aaron says, “Let my people go.”

Pharaoh says, “I am not going to do that.”

He turns to Moses, “I’m not....”

Can you not see how this would irritate Moses a little? “I heard it. I heard it.” It was God’s little judgment on him. He was not allowed to talk to Pharaoh because he lied to God.

Anyway, one of the greatest things that ever happened in his life, was this event at the foot of Mount Horeb.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire
out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush
burned with fire, and the bush [was] not consumed. (Exodus 3:2)

Right away you notice something very interesting here. The devouring fire is God’s way of demonstrating His presence. The pillar of fire. “Our God is a consuming fire,” the Bible says. He

is not merely fire, but He can appear in a flame of fire. Now it came “out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and beheld the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” That was pretty unusual. I like what one writer who has surveyed that area archaeologically said, “It was a miracle he found a bush.” Now I have also been through that area, and Sinai is even desolate of sagebrush. It is one of the most barren deserts in the entire world. The fact that there was a bush, was unusual. The bush was on fire. Moses was probably just a little upset about that because the bush was probably one of the few things he could have used to get a little relief from the heat of the sun and here, it is on fire. Anyway, he turns to see why the bush is not burned.

Exodus 3:4 says, “When the Lord saw....” Wait a minute. The Angel of the Lord appeared, but in verse 4 it says:

And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called
unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.
And he said, Here [am] I. (Exodus 3:4)

People say, “Oh come on, he’s talking to a bush?” If a voice came out of a bush that was on fire and talked to you, I think that you would listen. You would probably freeze and panic.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy
feet, for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy ground.
(Exodus 3:5)

God said the same thing to Joshua as you can find in Joshua 5. Again it was the Captain of the Host of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord that appeared to Joshua and told him to “take your shoes

off. The place where you are standing is holy ground.” And it was the Lord Yahweh who spoke to Joshua. Only it was the Angel of the Lord or the Captain of the Lord of Hosts. I did not even put that one down here. There are a lot of interesting things concerning this.

Moreover he said, I [am] the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:6)

You have to perform some sort of spiritual gymnastics to get out of the problem of this text. The Angel of the Lord is called *Yahweh* who turns aside, or calls to him. He is called God. He tells him to take off your shoes for the place where you are standing is holy ground.

There is a little chorus that I like which was written on this little fact about taking your shoes off, “because the place you are standing is holy ground.” It goes like this:

This is holy ground
We're standing on holy ground,
For the Lord is present and where He is is holy,
This is holy ground
We're standing on holy ground,
For the Lord is present and where He is is holy,

Go to Exodus 14. This is at the time they got out of Egypt and the Lord fought for them and defeated the armies of the Egyptians. Here is one of those six usages of the Angel of God.

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. (Exodus 14:19)

Remember in Zechariah, the Battle of Armageddon, they said that God will make those people Jews like the Angel of God who went before them. What is it referring to? The fact that who led them through the wilderness? It was not just Moses, and certainly after he got out of Mount Horeb he needed help. The Angel of God led them.

Here it says, “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them.” That pillar of cloud, that pillar of fire is described as being the glory of Yahweh in Exodus 40. The last chapter says:

Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (Exodus 40:34-38)

It is obvious, the Angel of the Lord, according to Exodus 14:19, is the one who went before them, who was in that pillar of cloud, yet according to Exodus 40 it was the glory of Yahweh that was in that pillar of cloud. The uniqueness of the Angel of the Lord is one of the prominent reasons why we speak of the preexistence of Jesus Christ.

Look at the case of Balaam, and turn to Numbers 22. Balaam was a prophet of God and he found out that it does not pay to compromise. He was being pressured by the king of Moab to curse Israel, but he finds out that God is in control, even of his own mouth. He has an experience with a donkey, where the donkey turns around and talks to him. Now that will shake you up a bit. When I read that story I like to say, “Hey, if God used Balaam’s ass, He can use you.” God can use anybody He wants anytime He wants. Do not think too highly of yourself.

And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the

right hand or to the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. (Numbers 22:22-35)

Again in the story, as you continue to read, God will tell him what to speak. Numbers 23:5 says that the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth. The point is that the Angel of the Lord is identified also as the Lord in that story.

Turn to Judges 2. Is anybody getting the idea that He might have existed before He was a baby in Bethlehem? This is a book that says, "Every man did what was right in his own eyes." We can call this chapter America chapter 2. Judges is a wonderful book, and there are a lot of great lessons in this book. To Gideon, as well as to the children of Israel, we see the message of the Angel of the Lord.

In Judges 2, to the Children of Israel, it says, "An angel of the Lord came up." It is not real clear, but look at what he said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you" and so forth. Then Judges 2:4 says, "It came to pass when the Angel of the Lord spake these words people not only wept, they sacrificed unto the Lord."

That is a clear passage, but turn over to Judges 6, which is the case of Gideon. In Judges 6:11 says, "an angel of the Lord," but Judges 6:12 says, "the Angel of the Lord." Gideon's response to this person was, "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why is this fallen?" (Why did the Lord bring us up?). Judges 6:145 says, and "Yahweh looked upon him." That is really amazing.

"The Angel of God" is mentioned in Judges 6:20, which is another usage of those six times of the Angel of God. "The Angel of the Lord" is used twice in Judges 6:21.

And when Gideon perceived that he [was] an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. And the LORD said unto him, Peace [be] unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it [is] yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. (Judges 6:22-24)

That is interesting. How many times you can see this? Flip over to Judges 13, which is about the parents of Samson. Manoah and his wife, who was barren, had no children.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou [art] barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. (Judges 13:3)

Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name. (Judges 13:6)

How would she know? Whatever it was, it really impressed her.

And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. (Judges 13:9)

Some people say that God and the angel of God are two different people here. Well keep going.

And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. (Judges 13:13)

And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

(Judges 13:15)

They were saying, “We’d really like to talk some more with you.”

And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? (Judges 13:16-18)

The word “wonderful” in Hebrew means “incomprehensible”—you cannot understand His name, says Isaiah 9:6, because it is wonderful. The story is not over.

And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. (Judges 13:22)

The Angel of the Lord is identified as being both Yahweh and Elohim, both Lord and God in the Old Testament. It is the Angel of the Lord that appeared to Hagar. We never even looked at that one, back in Genesis 16. It, too, is a very clear reference. The Angel of the Lord found her and said, “I will multiply thy seed.” The Lord gave that message to her. You will bear a son, and his name shall be Ishmael because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. She called the name of the Lord that spoke with her, “Thou God seest me.” Wow. The Angel of the Lord is called God there as well.

Was Jesus in existence before He became a baby in Bethlehem? If you are not sure about that, then you will definitely miss that section on the test.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

We are looking at the uniqueness of the Angel of the Lord in our discussion of the preexistence of Jesus Christ. So far we have been proving that this messenger (the Angel of the Lord) is in fact *Yahweh*. Now we have not yet really proven that it is Jesus.

Turn to Malachi 3. Now this is a very messianic passage. In fact, in many of the commentaries on the Passover you will find that this passage is mentioned because at Passover Jewish people would go to the door to see if Elijah is there—it is based on him and he is known as the messenger. The word is *malach* and is the same word that is translated as “angel.” Now in this particular verse we have a second *malach*.

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me” (Malachi 3:1). Now Malachi 4:5 picks up with the same thing. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of *Yahweh*.” We know (and all Jews agree as well as the Christians) that this messenger is Elijah the prophet. Interestingly, it is also applied to John the Baptist. A lot of people use this as an attack against the Bible’s accuracy, because they do not really understanding what Jesus said, “If you would have repented at the preaching of John the Baptist and this is Elijah.” That is a true statement even if Christ was talking about me, but none of the criticizers have ever figured it out. For example, God could say, “If you would repent at the preaching of David then this is Elijah.” Anybody who is turning the hearts of the people back to the Lord and the hearts of the fathers back to the children is coming in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Now in the technical sense, it was also possible in terms of the credentials of the Messiah and accepting Him, that if the nation had not rejected Him, but had received Him, then John the Baptist would have been the fulfillment of Elijah the prophet coming back. First of all, is Elijah going to come back? Absolutely. Is he still going to come back? Are Jews right at Passover to picture that in their Passover celebration? Absolutely. Elijah is still going to come back. Now I happen to believe that he is one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. The other one being Moses. A lot of people think that the two witnesses are going to be Enoch and Elijah, but Moses and Elijah make the most sense from a Jewish point of view. Elijah is to come back before the coming of that great and terrible day of the Lord, the Battle of Armageddon, to set up the kingdom.

Now, is it not possible that John the Baptist could have been an appearance of Elijah the prophet? Sure, it is possible. Why is it possible? What makes us so sure that Elijah the prophet who died

and now is spirit could not come and inhabit the body of John the Baptist? Now, I know this sounds really weird, but let me just stretch it a little further. Remember at the Resurrection there were two men in white apparel? Is it not possible, since Zechariah's prophecy said that these two who would be connected to the messianic hope are two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of glory? Is it not possible that the two men in white apparel were Moses and Elijah?

Let me put it another way. Who was on the Mount of Transfiguration? I think it was Mount Hermon where it happened. In Matthew 17 it says that two guys appeared with Jesus and they were even recognized. Either they had signs saying, "hello, my name is Moses," so Peter, James and John would know. The other guy had one too, saying, "hello, my name is Elijah." Or they could have told who they were by the length of their beards. They must have done something. The Lord could have said, "Here is Moses and Elijah." I do not know how they knew, but it says that they knew it was Moses and Elijah. Peter was so ballistic that he wanted to build three tabernacles for them. Now God does not share His glory with anyone, and so Peter's proposal was rejected. Who appeared? Moses and Elijah. Quit trying to battle with these people that try to trick you on this passage. Now Moses' body was in the grave awaiting the resurrection. Knowing this, is it possible for a spirit to come back and appear as a human being? Absolutely. It has happened many times and will happen again. Remember the angels are spirit beings and they can appear as men. Remember the devil and all the demons are spirit beings, and they can transform themselves into ministers of righteousness and teachers and prophets who are false. Do not let people use this argument against you, because it was very possible that Elijah could have inhabited the body of John the Baptist. Now, because they rejected him, this was not the case. Is Elijah still coming? Yes. He will appear. He is still coming.

What about the ascension? Jesus ascended to heaven as the Bible declares and two men in white apparel were there, telling the disciples, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven. This same Jesus will return in the same fashion” (Acts 1:9-11). Again, the messianic connection is very powerful as they appear again. Maybe it is the same two men appearing in every instance. Is it not a possibility that your Sunday school story was wrong. Is it possible? Would you just grant the probability of it? My goal is not for you to become dogmatic, but to think more critically.

Now, let us keep reading. The first one, Elijah, or John the Baptist, is the one who will prepare the way of the Lord. Isaiah 40 talks about that.

The next statement is, “And the Lord, *Yahweh*” It is not *Adonai* or is it? This becomes a great battle. I was talking to one of the gentlemen in the break here about the Jewish people growing up with a feeling that it is not *Malach Yahweh*, but *Malach Adonai*—“The messenger of the Lord.” They see *Adonai* is an earthly lord and Jehovah Witnesses like to capitalize on this. There was a JW teacher, who is now a Fundamentalist Baptist pastor, and he and I argued for two years until he came to believe that *Yeshua* is who He claimed. He used this verse all the time to prove his case. The first Lord is *Adonai*, but watch this carefully, “And the Lord, *Adonai*, when ye seek.”

Let me ask you a question. Do you believe that Jesus is an earthly lord? Let me put it another way. Do you think that He is going to be Lord of anything—ruling on the earth? Of course. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So, what is the problem here? It is not a problem that He is called an earthly lord, but that He called *Yahweh*?

Now watch this. “And Adonai whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger [*malach*, angel], of the covenant whom ye delight in. Behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts, Yahweh. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? He is like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap. He will sit as a refining and purifying of silver. He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness.”

I like to tell people that they cannot have their ice cream *and* cake too concerning this. Here is the point. No one that I know of, whether he be a JW, a Jewish teacher, a Protestant minister, a Roman Catholic, or anyone else, believes that the words of verse 2 are not speaking of *Yahweh*. “Who can stand before Him?” In fact, this statement is used several times in the Bible, including Psalm 130: “If He marks iniquities, who can stand in front of Him? Who is the purifier? Who is the refiner?” It is *Yahweh*—the Lord God and He is the only one who does that.

Now you see, they love to make a little switch here on you. But do not let them get away with it. We are talking about the one who is coming and He is called *Adonai* whom ye seek, *Malach* the messenger, the angel of the covenant. He is going to come and who can abide His coming? Who will stand when He appears? He is like the refiner’s fire. He will purify the sons of Levi. So you understand, this *Adonai*, *malach*, this messenger is in fact, the same as the one who will do all the refining and purifying. Therefore we have a difficult statement.

But we are not even done there. In verse 6, He continues speaking and says, “For I am the...” What? “Lord.” And here it is the word *Yahweh*. I am sorry, Jehovah’s Witnesses; I am Sorry my Jewish rabbinical friends. The one who is coming is declared to be *Yahweh*. “I change not.” This is the passage that we use to prove the immutability of God—the attribute that He never changes.

We all change, but God never changes. Yet, in this context it is a reference to *Yeshua*. Yet this should have been known already because Hebrews states, “He is the same yesterday, today and forever.” He is the unchangeable *ha Masheach* (Messiah).

By the way, we do not have to worry about this not being a reference to Jesus, because it is actually used in the Bible for Him in the Book of Revelation. We know that we are on good ground here. Even excluding the New Testament evidence, we have clear statements here that this angel of the covenant of God’s promise, is in fact an *Adonai* (an earthly lord), one who is coming, who will purify and cleanse, and this one is *Yahweh*—the one who never changes. Hallelujah!

Now, if you think that that one teaches the preexistence, look at the understanding of the Lord of Hosts. You cannot know how many times I have argued this point with Jehovah’s Witnesses. It is almost a lost cause because their minds become so blind. I have learned through the years to skip the arguments and go for the penetrating questions. Rather than let them control the conversation, I like to ask the questions. Besides, it is more Jewish that way. So, ask the questions. One of the questions is, “Do you know that phrase the Lord of Hosts? Is the word ‘Lord’ *Adonai* or *Yahweh*?” You see, by asking this question we cut out all the middle ground discussion along with all the little gymnastics to try and prove that it is only *Adonai*, an earthly lord because it says “Lord of Hosts,” which means armies. And So it is an earthly lord.

Then, you would expect to see *Adonai* and not *Yahweh*. But in fact, it is the exact opposite. Now the Lord of Hosts is used 236 times. And so to look up every occurrence would be a great study but we do not have the time for that here. This is what I want you to know. There are four things about the Lord of Hosts. When you get these down, you can answer any cultist at your door.

1. This Lord of Hosts is the redeemer, which we will prove shortly.
2. He is the king.
3. He is the God of the armies of Israel.
4. He is the commander of the army of the Lord.

Let us go to Isaiah chapter 44, verse 6. And so, you will be able to answer the following question: “How does the Bible use the term, ‘the Lord of Hosts’? To what is He likened?” The answer is four-fold: redeemer, king, God, and commander. Although I do not always require this, one of the practices that I would get involved with if I were you is to connect at least one passage with the point that you are trying to get down. Make this a part of your system, so that if somebody comes up to you and debates the subject, you know the point well. You can respond, “Yes, He’s the redeemer” and rattle off, Isaiah 44:6. So I try, when I put this together, to make it a part of my life and connect those verses. That is very important when you are talking to somebody to turn immediately to the passage. So, if you want to prove the redeemer is *Yahweh* of armies, you already have one verse to prove it (Isaiah 44:6). “Thus saith the Lord”—that is the word *Yahweh* in Hebrew, who is the King of Israel. This way, Everybody is in agreement; Jehovah’s Witnesses are in agreement; Jews are in agreement. Yes, *Yahweh* is the King of Israel and His redeemer. Right away that is *ha Masheach*. We know that He is the Messiah—the Redeemer—the One who will save us. We understand that, and it says that His redeemer [is] the Lord of Hosts. I cannot tell you how many Jehovah’s Witnesses say that there are two words for Lord. One is *Yahweh* and one is *Adonai*, and everybody who does not know, always says, “Oh I see,” as if it is something new to them. Now they never really told you if it was *Adonai* in the text because it is not. It is the word *Yahweh* both times—there are two occurrences of *Yahweh* in the same verse.

Let me tell you what verse the Jehovah's Witnesses are going to quote to you: Psalm 110:1. Here David said that the Lord (*Yahweh*) said unto my Lord (*Adonai*) sit here at my right hand. They quote and show you that in the New Testament, that is quoted of Jesus. "You see," they say, "Jesus is nothing but an earthly Lord." But they get away with it because nobody stops them and says, "Oh then He is always *Adonai*, and never *Yahweh*." They will politely say, "We are not trying to be offensive, but the Messiah is never called *Yahweh* in the Old Testament." And because you memorized references with your points, you say, "Then please explain to me this problem in Isaiah 44:6. We have two occurrences of *Yahweh* here. In fact the very term you said was the Messiah, the redeemer, is in fact, called *Yahweh* of armies—the Lord of Hosts. How do you get out of that?" Most of them I have talked to are not very knowledgeable and they are only knowledgeable according to the training that they have received. Just like you, when you go out witnessing, you often just memorize what somebody told you, rather than really know it yourself. So, they do not really know that verse and so they usually say, (the classic answer): "What translation are you reading from?" See now, they are taught to do this because they can get on the translation problem and they have got you away from the situation. And I always say, "Well, let's just do it in Hebrew." They're response, "Ah, I think I've got to go."

The next thing I always ask the Jehovah's Witnesses is, "Why don't you lead us in a word of prayer before you go?" See in their training, they are told never to pray in front of you, because you are not a Jehovah's Witness. You are a pagan to them—an abomination to God. They always answer, "We'd rather not." Ask them, "Oh, I thought you people were religious." They will hesitate and you can say, "You mean you don't care enough for me to pray for me? Why don't you pray for me that I'd become a Jehovah's Witness? I don't understand. I mean, you should pray right now. If you don't pray for me then you're a liar, a deceiver, a hypocrite and I want you out of my house."

Now there are different ways to witness, of course. Perhaps you would prefer my wife's method which is to serve cookies and coffee and then to act sweet. This was the way that we got them in the house in the first place. It works best if you use both methods.

In Isaiah 6, we read the great vision of Isaiah. "I saw the Lord." Boy, that is a great one! I love that passage. "The year that King Uzziah died." He was a leper the last sixteen years of his life and had to shout to people, "Unclean!" That will help you understand this vision better. He was a good man. Jotham, his son, reigned as a co-regent with him for about sixteen years. When King Uzziah died it was a critical moment in Israel's history. Jotham's son Ahaz had some problems. Now Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord." The word "Lord" here is *Adonai*, an earthly Lord. He is sitting on a throne high and lifted up and His train filled the temple. This must be an unusual earthly lord because the angels were there crying, "holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts." And the word here is *Yahweh*. "The whole earth is full of His glory."

Verse 5 states, "Woe is me. I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips." Isaiah is identifying himself with King Uzziah, this good king to whom he often preached. "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for my eyes have seen the king, *Yahweh* of Hosts." One thing a lot of Jewish people as well as Jehovah's Witnesses do not want to say, is that they do not want to call the Father *Adonai*. They do not want that at all.

And so, there is a problem here. Is the *Adonai* that is sitting on the throne, the Father? They have to agree. They are not going to give this glory to Jesus, that is for sure. Well, then He is called *Yahweh* of Hosts, the Father. They will not mind that, but He is called the king *Yahweh* of Hosts. And they will not mind that He is a king either. But, how do you explain that He is called *Adonai*

in the first verse? “I don’t know. Tradition. I don’t know. I don’t know. Maybe it’s a manuscript problem. I don’t know.” Do you understand me?

To me, the Bible is so wonderful. The details of it are absolutely incredible. Here God gives you a situation you cannot get out of. Most everyone reading this would think, I saw *Yahweh* sitting on His throne. But wait a minute. You saw *Adonai*, an earthly Lord. Now, He is called *Yahweh* of Hosts. He is called the King. We’ve got an earthly lord called the King, *Yahweh* of Hosts. What a wonderful passage this is.

I hope you are all getting excited about this! Turn to 1 Samuel 17:45. What father who loves the Lord and teaches the Bible to his children has not told the story of David and Goliath? I always did it dramatically. My kids always wanted me to play Goliath, and I never could quite figure that out.

[Now when the English Bible, specifically the King James Version, translates the word “lord” with all caps (e.g., LORD) it refers to *Yahweh* and if it is spelled with just a uppercase “L” (e.g., Lord) then it refers to *Adonai*.]

First Samuel 17:45 says, “Then said David to the Philistine, ‘Thou comest to me with a sword, with a spear, with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of *Yahweh* of armies. The God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied.’” Folks, this is one of the greatest texts you could ever use to prove that the Lord of Hosts is in fact, the God of the armies of Israel. That opens up your brain to a lot of other passages as well.

Now go to Joshua 5:13. “It came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho that he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.” Remember the story of Balaam in Numbers? The Angel of the Lord had a sword drawn in his hand. “And Joshua went unto him and said, ‘Art thou for us or for our adversaries?’” That is a smart question. He said, “Nay; but as captain of the host of *Yahweh* am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.” Look who is saying what. A lot of people, including Jehovah’s Witnesses, try to prove that Jesus is just a commander and that He is not the Lord. Boy, it is certainly an unusual commander as He told Joshua to take his shoes off for the place he stands is holy. Now that is something that is said only by *Yahweh*.

If you keep reading you will notice that Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went in and none went out. Now he just asked, “What do You say to me?” And He said, “Take your shoe off your foot.” And then *Yahweh* talks to him. He just asked Him, “Tell me what You want.” And He answers, but only the Bible says it was *Yahweh* talking. Once again, we have the Commander of the Lord of Hosts as another peg in our whole argument here.

I think one of the interesting things though, is the use of plural pronouns. From Genesis 1:26 it says, “Let Us make man in Our image after Our likeness.” In chapter eleven at the Tower of Babel it says, “Let Us go down and confound their language.” In Isaiah 6:8 where we were a moment ago. Isaiah said, “Here am I.” But that was an answer. The Lord said, “Whom shall I send and who will go for Us?”

The problem of the plural pronoun is really a difficult one. Here are some of the arguments. The reason why we have that plural is because Elohim is a plural noun, even though it is referring to God. Well that is interesting, except that in the passages the Lord, *Yahweh*, said, “let Us go down” etc. Many of the Jewish writers—in fact most of them—argue that He is talking to the angels. Yet there is an exception because they do not like this explanation in the story of Creation because God alone creates. Therefore, they do not like God saying to the angels, “Hey, let us make man.” They do not believe the angels were involved in the process. But they do like that explanation in Genesis eleven, “Let us go down,” because He is the Lord of Hosts, armies, and He is taking all of His angels down with Him. When He says, “Let us,” that is where they get it, but they do not prefer that interpretation in Genesis 1. So in Genesis 1, the average Hebrew commentary on that says that this is what is called a majestic plural. “What’s a majestic plural?” you ask. It means really big. “Let us, I’m a really big person create man in our—really big—image.” But when I recite it that way, all of my Jewish rabbinical friends always say, “You’re crazy.” But I say, “It is crazy to hear you say it is a majestic plural. What good does that do? The plural even uses possessive of the word ‘image.’ Come on, what are you talking about here?”

“The Lord our God is one Lord.” They always repeat the *Shema* back to me, even if it is not the Shabbat. It is from Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” They go right back to that. I say, “Hey, quit putting me on.” Then they will get excited, which I like, by the way. I like the opposition to get a little excited. That means we can continue this discussion a little further. It is when the rabbi will walk away, you think, “Oh man, I lost that one.” Anyway, “The Lord our God is one Lord.” I said, “Hey quit putting me on. You know and I know *echad*. We use it every day. It means more than one.” And they always turn back and say, “Give one example.” And I say, “Sure. Genesis 2:24. The Bible says a man shall leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife and the two shall be *echad*, one flesh.” Apparently two can be one in

some sense. So God has to be more than one. And they always say, “More than one what?” As if this were something heavy duty.

Folks, there is only one God. There never has been more than one God. There are not three Gods. We do not believe that. There is only one God. But this God exists in three distinct persons as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit without ever doing any injustice to the unity which all three of those persons enjoy as one God. I hope that everybody is paying attention because this is imperative to understanding.

Ask a person the following question “What is Christianity based on?” They will respond by saying, “The death and resurrection of Christ Jesus is the central issue.” There are a lot of us who have done a lot of theological studies who come back to saying that the real watershed, besides the Bible being the word of God, is the triunity of God. If you get messed up with the Trinity it will result with a skewed view of who Jesus is. It will also skew your view of the death and the resurrection of Christ. And so the root issue of Christianity may, in fact, be the triunity of God. This means that the Jehovah’s Witnesses and our Jewish friends are correct in saying, “That is the real issue between us and you evangelical Christians.” I do not fight them on that because I agree with them that the triunity one of the central issues. I will tell them that they are exactly right. Then they go on to say, “You guys made it three Gods.” “Excuse me. We don’t believe in three Gods. We only believe in one God.” And so that doctrine affects everything else. I would not build the case for the presence of my Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament on plural pronouns alone. You need all the arguments.

But let us, just for a moment to wrap up this point, look at the book of John. This is one of the easier books you can take and go from Greek back to Hebrew. It is simply Jewish and it is filled

with Jewish statements and phrases and contrasts. In John 1:1, he tells us, “the Word was God.” Now, I will not go over that again. Verse 14 says, “He became flesh,” but not “He was flesh.” The word used for “became” is *ginomai*, which means a change of condition. This is the key text assuming the preexistence of Christ in the New Testament. “He became flesh,” which means that He was in existence previously to becoming flesh.

Now in John 6:51—just to show you a few things here—Jesus said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever. And the bread I will give is my flesh which I give for the life of the world.” That is pretty strong talk, is it not?

John 6:62, “What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before.” Do you understand that the New Testament is agreeing to His preexistence? Jesus said, “I was the living bread that came down from heaven.” He was in heaven before. And in 6:62, “What if you see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before.” So you see, the New Testament clearly teaches the preexistence of Christ.

In John 8:58, we find a tremendous statement to His preexistence. It may be good to remember this verse for a future day. John 8:58 states, “Jesus said, ‘Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.’” Now, if there were ever a statement of preexistence, there it is! We may question what He meant, but the Jews did not question it a bit. They immediately picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. Let us think about it. He could have said, “Before Abraham was I was.” And that would have been true. Now Abraham lived about 2100 years before Christ. “Before Abraham existed I was.” He was there. The Jews said, “You are not even yet 50 years old and you are saying that. Hey, come on.” Now the Jews would not have thrown stones at a guy who is crazy, but they will stone a man for blasphemy. You see, they knew that Jesus was

claiming to be *Yahweh*. Right then and there. There was not a single doubt in their minds. So how did they get that? Because every Jewish home teaches what the name of God is. It happened at the time of Moses. So when He said, “I am that I am,” it means, “Who I am I am and nothing you can say or do is ever going to change that. I’m the unchangeable Lord. Whoever I am I still am, even if you never understand that.”

Now when Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am,” they knew exactly what He said and as a result they picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. Even if you do not like that, you have to agree that He does indicate his preexistence by the statement.

In John 17:5, Jesus is prays a high priestly prayer to His Father. He says, “Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Now He claims to be in existence, sharing the glory of His Father before Creation. And so we even have a time factor now in terms of preexistence. In 17:24, He mentions again: “Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.”

In Philippians 2, Paul writes for us to have the same mind which Christ had, “Who being in the form (*morphe*) of God, did not think it robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation, took on the form of a servant, made in likeness as man, fashioned as a man, and humbled Himself.” The point is that He was in existence in the *morphe* of God—the very form of God—before He became a man. You see, the preexistence of Christ is assumed in Philippians 2:5-7. Colossians 1:17 leaves no doubt, “He is before all things.” That is the argument.

One other thing that I would like to mention, before we exit this topic of His preexistence, is His pre-eminence over all things. I touched on that in our last time together, but I would like to end

with it here. Would you take your Bibles and turn to Ephesians. This is one of the most wonderful studies, and we have only scratched the surface. In our course we have to move from doctrinal matter to doctrinal matter about Christ, but in fact, we could spend probably the entire course on this as it is such a heavy-duty matter.

There is a book that is now out of print, but you can sometimes find in an old bookstore. It was reprinted a couple of years back, but now is apparently is out of print again. The book was written by *Hengstenberg* dealing with Christology in the Old Testament. It is absolutely fabulous—a good piece of work!

Ephesians 1:20-23 addresses God's mighty power:

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Would you casually say the Bible thinks He's number one? That He is Pre-eminent over everything that has ever been made? That He is the Creator of it all?

Colossians 1:18-19 states, "He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father

that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Class, I want you to look at this text. In most English translations, the word the Father is in italics. Why? Because it is not in the original text. Let us read it as it is in the original text. The subject of the sentence is “all the fullness.” And so it would read like this: “All the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him.” It’s a little different because all the fullness can be like a tangible entity that the Father now puts in Jesus and you can water down what is being said by that. No. All the fullness is who God is, everything God is. And all the fullness, namely God Himself, was pleased to dwell in that physical body of the Lord Jesus.

Turn to Colossians 2:9, just to reemphasize this. “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily.” In a body the fullness of the God dwelt. Now look at the next statement: “And ye are complete in Him.” It does not say, “thee are complete in Him,” but “ye.” The Old King James is the only help here. All modern English translations do not help you here. There is not one believer here who is complete like Jesus, yet that is taught by a lot of false teachers. No, you are not going to be God. You never will be God. You are men and women. You are not God and never will be! So all those Christian meetings on Christian television where they shout out, “You are God” and quote this verse, they are misquoting the verse. It is not “you” as an individual, but “you” or “ye” as plural—that is, the body of Christ. All the believers are complete. It is true that the word complete in verse 10, is the same root as fullness in verse 9. We are, as a group, filled up in Him. If all the fullness of God is in His physical body and we are in Him then we are obviously filled up too. He is the head of all principality and power. He is preeminent in everything.

This is some heavy-duty stuff here. But let me just tell you this: all the fullness of God never dwelt in any one particular physical body except Jesus. There never was anyone else, yet with all of our bodies put together we form the body of the church, and the fullness of the Lord is

expressed; His life is expressed. What does that mean? That means that I might know something about Him that you do not know. Or I might express or reflect something in Him that you are not expressing. And you express something about Him that I do not know. And together we all learn and we grow and we edify one another and grow in Him who is the head of it all.

Is everybody following this? I think we have had enough today. This is one of those examples where your head hurts and only lunch will help. Let us pray.

Thank You, Lord, for Your blessed Word. Thank you for the fact that our Lord is being honored and exalted. He is above everyone and everything. He is the Lord of all, and may that be applied in every one of our lives. Help us to stop trying to take the controls and run things. May we fall at His feet and worship Him. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name—the name of our Messiah. Amen.

Thank You, Lord, for the fact that His name is above every name, and that includes all principalities and powers—not only in the world now but in the one to come. No one is greater than He. You tell us that He is better than the angels; He is better than Abraham; He is better than Moses; He is better than all the priests. He gave us a better sacrifice and He is our coming King—our King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We come to not only study about Him, but we come also to worship, love, and adore Him. We fall at Your feet, Lord, and proclaim You alone as worthy. Thank You. Bless our time together. We pray in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.

We are coming to one of the more exciting parts of our study on Christology and that is the Messiah Himself. Take your Bibles and turn to John 20:30-31. It says, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written.” Some say that there are ten signs; others say nine; others twelve; and still others say six. This makes you wonder if they all are reading the same Gospel. However many, “These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ [the Messiah] the Son of God.”

What if I asked you the question, “Do you need to believe that Jesus is the Messiah in order to be saved?” I rarely see anybody saying that you do in a gospel tract. Yet, according to the Bible it is absolutely critical. The question is, “Who is *Yeshua*? Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah?” All of this was written, John said, “So that you might believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of

God, and that believing ye might have life through His name.” So is it critical to believe that He is the Messiah? Absolutely! That should be one of our essential points of belief in order to become a Christian.

Now, this whole issue of the Messiah is a very interesting one. You will notice that the word Messiah appears in the English Bible in just one passage. This is true, but the word, Christ in Greek also means Messiah. It is just a matter of what we are looking for in English. That also does not really deal with the Hebrew word. Now, interestingly, in the English Old Testament, it is only mentioned in Daniel 9:25-26—the prophecy of the 70 weeks. Here it mentions Messiah the prince. I find that very fascinating because it helps us to understand what sort of bias there was among Christians even at the time of the King James Version and subsequent English versions against whether or not the Old Testament really teaches the Messiah.

I know that you are going to find this hard to believe, but Jewish rabbis of the past actually read more messianic hope into the Bible than Christians by far. When I read Christian/theology books about the doctrine of Christ, they mention a few key passages that are messianic claims. Now, all you have to do is go to the Jewish rabbis to find out that there was a lot more that *they* saw as messianic than we Christians. It is really interesting!

Let me tell you a little bit about the Jewish view of the Messiah. Today the average Jewish person does not want to talk to you about the Messiah. First of all, anybody who is going to bring up that subject is probably going to talk about *Yehoshua* or *Yeshua* (the abbreviated form). They are going to talk about Jesus, and they are already ready to fight you. Therefore the Jews do not want to talk about the Messiah and because of that there has been a growing liberal rabbinical idea perpetuated on the Jewish people that somehow our history is not filled with messianic

prophecies. That is a flat out lie. I do not care who you are (Jewish or Gentile). It is a flat out lie. Jewish writings are filled with the talk of the Messiah!

Let me give you a few ideas of what I mean—a few little things that might be a blessing to you. Many of you have heard about the Talmud. The Talmud was compiled over a period of three centuries, from c. A.D. 200-500. It contains sixty separate treatises in thirteen very thick volumes. Every good Jewish boy would read the Talmud. There are some condensed versions of it—like a Reader’s Digest Condensed version that you can buy in bookstores. I have several of those and get a lot of the teachings of the Talmud in it. The Talmud states unequivocally these words, “All the prophets prophesied only for the days of the Messiah. And the world was not created but only for the Messiah.” That’s pretty strong!

Now the Targums are an explanatory version of the Bible written in Aramaic, dating from circa the second century A.D. (About a hundred years after the time that Jesus and the apostles). In the Jewish teachings of the Targums there are seventy-two Old Testament passages that apply directly to the Messiah. They were written after Jesus and the disciples, when there was a lot of commentary against Christianity, yet they still admit that the Old Testament is filled with messianic truth.

Maimonides, probably one of the most famous Jewish scholars of all times, has written articles of faith that every godly Jewish man should say. Now the articles were to be recited every day of your life. His twelfth article says, “I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah and that though He tarry I will wait daily for His coming.” When was the last time you thought your Jewish rabbi might be saying that everyday? You see, things have really changed since Maimonides in the Middle Ages wrote that.

A lot of you have heard that the Psalms are messianic. Did you know that Jewish rabbis read more of the Messiah into the Psalms than the Christians? Jewish tradition actually says that seventy-three of the 150 Psalms speak of the Messiah. Do you remember, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”? That is in the Hallel, Psalms 113-118. The word “Hallel,” means to praise the Lord, and they are sung at Passover in the middle of them there are statements like, “Open the gates of the temple.” There have been many songs written about that. “This is the day the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.” It is not talking about today, but about a particular day—the day when the builders rejected the cornerstone. “This is the day!” We believe that is the day Jesus died. Listen to this as it is very interesting to me and should be interesting to you (at least by test time). According to Rashi, one of the greatest scholars of all time—every Jewish person reads Rashi—now according to him, concerning this passage in Psalm 118 (where it says the stone which the builders rejected), “There is no doubt that this speaks of Messiah, the son of David.” Now concerning Micah 5:2 where it says, “Thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of he shall come the one who shall govern My people Israel.” Rashi says that that passage in Micah 5:2 is talking about the Messiah who will be the ruler of Israel and must be born in Bethlehem. Is that not interesting?

Here is another little interesting quote. A medieval rabbi by the name, Abraham ben Ezra was fascinated with the New Testament Book of Revelation because he saw so many messianic quotes in it. What he said still stands today because I love to tell this to my Jewish friends. He said that the Book of Revelation was written by a Jewish man under the power of the Holy Spirit and is acceptable for all Jews to read. I always like to say to my Jewish friends, “You do read the Book of Revelation, don’t you? Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra said it was acceptable for all Jews to read and it was written by a Jewish man under the power of the Holy Spirit.” I love it.

This goes on and on. It is so remarkable as I have quote after quote after quote. Another interesting one relates to Genesis 49:10, which we will be looking at it in a moment. It is a prophecy about the tribe of Judah, which tells us that “the scepter will not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between the feet, when you come out of a womb of a woman in that line of Judah, until Shiloh comes.” Now people do not know whether Shiloh was a proper name or whether we should break it down in its Hebrew letters, which would mean “he whose it is.” In other words, the one to whom the scepter belongs. It will never depart from Judah until the one to whom it was intended finally comes. It is interesting that rabbi Gottleib Kline points out that Shiloh has a numerical value. Every Hebrew letter has a numerical value. For instance, my name has a numerical value of fourteen. That is extremely important for you to know. Why do I want to know that the teacher’s name has a numerical of fourteen? Because in Matthew 1 it says “This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham, the son of David.” Then it proceeds to divide history from Abraham all the way to Joseph and Mary in sets of fourteen. Three sets of fourteen to be exact. Everyone who has ever studied it knows that it does not represent all the people that are in that line. There are far more than 14 generations. Why did the Bible organize it in three sets of fourteen? Because the numerical value of David’s name, He who is a son of David. It is a messianic/Jewish poetic way of saying the Messiah is the only thing we are talking about here.

Now, Shiloh has a numeric value in Hebrew of 358. It is also interesting that the word for Messiah is 358. *Masheach* in Hebrew has exactly an equivalent of 358. Is that a coincidence? I do not think so. With Shiloh (“he who comes”) there is a play on the word. In other words, we have Messiah there.

By the way, the numerical quantity of the word “snake” in Hebrew also is 358. It is the word *nachash*. In the rabbi’s writings on Genesis 3:15 (which we are going to look at right away), it speaks of the seed of the woman that will crush the head of the snake. Now they write these words on the basis of the fact that the numerical quality of the word serpent is identical to the Messiah. Here is the official Jewish interpretation, which they deny today, but unfortunately it is in print. It says, “The Messiah alone will crush the head of the serpent.” That is the official Jewish interpretation on Genesis 3:15, and the average Jew you witness to will deny it.

Do you remember when you are given all the genealogies in the early chapters of Genesis and it speaks about Perez. In his day the earth was divided, referring to the Tower of Babel. Listen to the Midrash Raba, “The last Savior of the world is the Messiah, the son of David, who is descended from Judah’s son Perez.” It just goes on and on.

Genesis 3:15 speaks of Christ where he will crush the head of the serpent and his heel will be bruised, and there will be enmity between Satan’s seed and the woman’s seed. It is interesting that in the Jerusalem Targum, which Jews are required to read, says, “They will make peace in the end at the close of the end of the days”—the days of the Messiah King. In other words, Jewish boys are reading that and many times it just goes in one ear and out the other. What it is talking about is the Messiah. The Messiah is in Genesis 3:15!

Now, we Christians say in Genesis 3:15 that this is, in fact, the first mention of the Messiah in the Bible. “The one who will crush the head of the serpent.” Christians talk about this being the *protoevangelium*, meaning the first mention of the gospel. Did you know that Jewish teachers teach that Messiah comes before Genesis 3:15? You say, “Where do they get that?” Look at Genesis 1:3, “God said, let there be light and there was light.” Now in Aramaic (remember the

Targums were written in Aramaic) the word is *nahora*, which means light. Would you believe the rabbis list it as one of the secret names of the Messiah in the Bible. They say that He is the light. He is the *nahora*.

If you follow that concept through the Scriptures, they go to Isaiah 42:6 and Isaiah 60:1, which says that He will be a light to all the nations. They are absolutely surprised that a Jewish man, again, who believed in *Yeshua* said in John 8:12, “I am the Light of the world.” Exactly what the Jewish rabbi said was the title of the Messiah. So in that moment He was standing in the court of the women at the Feast of Dedication, which is Hanukkah. In that particular feast in the Court of the Women, also called the Court of the Treasury where they bring their gifts, there are gigantic candelabra. I am not talking about the menorah in the holy place; only priests can go in there, but out in the courtyard, these giant candelabra. They lit them during Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. In the middle of that, the Bible records that Jesus, at the top of His voice, shouted out, “I am the Light of the world and he who follows Me will not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” That was not brand new teaching, but if any Jew heard Him say it, knowing what the rabbis had said for years, they would have recognized it.

How do you handle this in terms of the Messiah being the seed of the woman? First of all, the evidence among Jewish rabbis teaching is that this verse refers to the Messiah. There is no question about it. It refers to the Messiah according to Jewish rabbis. Why today have they changed their view? What do they say now?

A few years ago I was on a tour in Israel and we were at the northern part of Galilee, Kuryat Shemona. While there we would all bed down at this kibbutz for the night. As I was sitting in the dining room of the kibbutz, we were having coffee and tea together among the Jewish guides.

There was a rather large group, so there was about five or six guides still standing and sitting there. They had heard me speak now for about a week in Israel. I like the Jewish guides as they are all military—all armed in order to protect the people that are there, even though the people do not know they are. They are kind of cool guys, most of them are *sabra*, meaning they were born in the land, thus not Americanized. Anyway, I am sitting with these Jewish guides and one of them said, “Hey David.”

I said, “What?”

He said, “We have been listening to you.”

I said, “Well, it’s about time.” We had that kind of repartee.

They said, “No, we’ve been listening to you and we’re just a little concerned for you.”

I said, “Why is that?”

“Well, we know you don’t like to make mistakes. And you made a big one today, very big.”

I said, “What did I do?”

They said, “Well you indicated that the Messiah is the seed of the woman and you gave Genesis 3:15. And I mean, you’re just way off.” He said, “Messiah is not mentioned in that verse.”

I said, “Sure He is. He’s the seed of the woman.”

“No, He’s not.” He said, “the Hebrew doesn’t say that.”

I said, “Have you got a Hebrew Bible?”

He said, “Sure.” He went over and got out it out of the book case. Everybody laid around their Hebrew Bibles and we’re reading it.

I said, “Okay let me ask a question now.” I said, “Who is the seed of the woman?”

They said, “Oh that’s the Jewish people.”

“The Jewish people? Well then, who’s the seed of the serpent?”

They all looked at one another. “We don’t want to say.”

I said, “Well let me tell you what you believe. You believe the seed of the serpent are all the Gentiles in the world.” Well... And so we’re laughing a little bit about that. I said, “But you’re all wrong. And it’s based on Hebrew grammar, not on my opinion.”

“What do you mean? We know it real well.” One guy told me, “I won the national Bible contest, man. I’ve got it memorized.”

I said, “Well you didn’t memorize it too good.”

He said, “What do you mean?”

I said, “Well, because it’s not plural, it’s singular. So exactly which Jew is the seed of the woman?”

He said, “Very good point.” He said, “Very good point.” Like Paul heard in his day they said, “Oh we’re tired. We’ll hear you again about this matter.” And they’re out. They didn’t want to stay any more.

Turn to Matthew 1. One of the embarrassing things about that passage, or should I say, troubling, is that it is the seed of the woman. What’s wrong with that? Well, last I heard the sperm comes from a man and not a woman. Is that not interesting. You see, Genesis 3:15 is a hint. Now some people think that that word “seed” means descendants. You know, that is the way they handle it, but go to Matthew 1 and see if the Bible is consistent in the New Testament. It is an accurate description of this.

In Matthew 1:16 it says that *Yacob* begat *Yosef*. “Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.” What am I pointing out? The pronoun, of whom, is feminine and cannot refer to Jacob. It cannot refer to Joseph in that verse either. It can only refer to Mary. You will not find that anywhere else, but the Bible’s accuracy is incredible. It did not use the plural pronoun to indicate that He is the son of both of them. It says very clearly, “of whom,” meaning only through Mary was born Jesus. Joseph and his sperm were not involved, Christ is indeed the seed of a woman.

How was He conceived? The Bible tells you in Luke 1; He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. You needed the egg of Mary do you not? I don't think so at all, but we are going to talk about that when we get to the virgin birth and it will blow you away. You will have to brush up on Mendel's laws of genetics when we get to that problem. He is the seed of the woman.

Now look at verse 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise when as His mother was espoused, betrothed, engaged to Joseph, before they came together. Look at the accuracy here. Before they came together. They never had sex. She was found with child. How? Of the Holy Ghost. You see, Genesis 3:15 is speaking of the seed of a woman that will crush the seed of the serpent. That is the gospel. It is a messianic claim of Jesus Christ.

Now go to Genesis 9, as we continue our investigation of the Messiah. Genesis 9:26 describes a blessing that Noah gave to his sons. At the same time he is cursing his grandson Canaan, who apparently was involved in some sort of immoral act while he was drunk and asleep. Now verse 26 says, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." The word *shem* means name. Once again, the rabbis say that this is the Messiah, *Shem*. Was there a man named Shem who was the son of Noah? Yes. Notice that it does not say, "Blessed be the Lord God of Japheth," or "of Ham." It says it "of Shem," because the Messiah would come through the line of Shem. That is where we get the idea of Semitic peoples. It means people of the Name. What name are we talking about? It is the name that is above every other name. When you read the word "Shem," you do not even need to read it as a proper noun: "Blessed be the Lord God of the Name." The question is, what name? Does the Bible give any indication about whose name is greater than anybody else's name? Of course it does on numerous occasions. His name is wonderful, the counselor, almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Who is the Name? Who is this descendant of Shem? It is the Messiah.

In Genesis 12 when God made His wonderful promise to Abraham, look at the last part of verse 3. “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” All people of the earth. Verse 7, “Unto thy seed will I give this land.” The Lord appeared to him and said that to him.

Turn to Matthew 1:1 where it says that He is the son of Abraham. I want you to really turn to Galatians 3. Who is the seed of Abraham that is going to bring all the blessings and promises of God? He is going to fulfill them. Who is the One, the child of Abraham through whom all the families of the world will be blessed?

Galatians 3:8, “And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen [the nations, the Gentiles] through faith preached before the gospel [the good news] unto Abraham saying, ‘In thee shall all nations be blessed.’”

You see, I am not making this up. The New Testament says that that was the preaching of the gospel. Look at verse 14, “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ [*Yeshua Hamashea*], that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” It is very clear.

Now look at the sixteenth verse. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. “He saith not, and to seeds as of many.” Did you know that some modern English translations, and I’m ashamed to say, the New King James Version, as it reflects on the promise of Abraham translates it as descendants. Now sometimes that is proper, but it cannot be here because of the New Testament’s clarification. “It is not to seeds as many, but is one. And to thy seed which

is...” What? What does it say? Galatians 3:16, what does it say? “Christ!” The Messiah is that seed of Abraham. So I am not making it up.

There is a messianic prophecy also in Genesis 12:3 when he said, “In thee, Abraham, shall all nations of the earth be blessed.” He was talking about the seed—a person—a son of Abraham.

Look at Genesis 17. He is also the seed of Isaac not Ishmael. Ishmael is the father of twelve princes—the father of twelve divisions of the Arab peoples of the world. You are not Arab unless you are a son of Ishmael, which makes an interesting scene in the Middle East as many of you have heard me say. Syria is not Arab. Iraq is not Arab. Iran is not Arab. Jordan is not Arab. Egypt is not Arab. Saudi Arabia is not Arab. Kuwait *is* Arab. Kuwaitis are the direct descendants of Ishmael’s second son named Kidar. But God spoke of the Arabs being wanderers all over the wilderness and all these different nations, and oh how history has shown that to be true. “We don’t have a homeland.” Why do you think they want a homeland in Israel? It’s a place to call home. You can understand it from their point of view.

But the Messiah will not come from Ishmael. Did you know that Yassar Arafat, the chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, once stood up at the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem and proclaimed that the Palestinian Jesus was a descendant of Ishmael, not Isaac. That the Jews are wrong. And that Christ is an Arab. Now that may sound ludicrous to you, but there are millions of Arabs who hold to that belief. And there were shouts to Jesus in Bethlehem and can you imagine what people thought. The Palestinian Jesus? Who is an Arab? The son of Ishmael? Well, the Bible is very clear. It is not through Ishmael. It is through Isaac.

Look at Genesis 17:18, “And Abraham said unto God, ‘O that Ishmael might live before thee.’”

This was his answer to the problem of his barrenness and his wife’s barrenness. God said, “Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed. And shalt call his name Isaac,” which means laughter.

When Sarah heard that she was going to have a child she was 89 years old. You would have laughed too. So God, said to just call his name Isaac the rest of his life. Everybody every time they see him, they will just start laughing.

Can you imagine going to school. “How old’s your dad?”

“Oh, about 110.”

“Can he come out and play?”

“No, he can’t walk.”

What did the kids say about his dad? Everybody heard the story. You know, in Jewish homes when they tell that story, if they do not laugh spontaneously they have to actually create it. It is the instruction of the fathers and grandfathers in teaching children. You tell the story and you just start laughing wildly and hysterically. And actually behind that is our confidence in the miraculous. Our laughter is with joy over what God can do. It is Amazing!

But it is very clear here. It was through Isaac that the Messiah was born. He said, “Thou shalt call his name Isaac and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him.” He then promises to bless Ishmael. In verse 21 He says, “But My covenant I

will establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.” That is pretty clear.

Look at Genesis 21:12, “God said unto Abraham, ‘Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, because of thy bondwoman.’” This is Hagar and Ishmael being kicked out. “In all that Sarah has said unto thee, hearken unto her voice.” Why? “For in Isaac shall they seed be called.”

We just eliminated a lot of folks from the possibility of being the Messiah. All the nations of the world that came from Japheth—remember God said he would enlarge the borders of Japheth. They are the world empires. The Japhetic empires. All the sons of Ham: Cush, Ethiopia, Misria, Egypt, Put, Libya, Canaan, the Canaanites, all of them. Now, none of the children of Japheth or Ham would yield the Messiah. It has to be through the line of Shem. And it is a particular man in the Shem line, Abraham; None of Nahor: None of Tirah. Simply, through Abraham, then Isaac; Not through Ishmael. None of the Arab peoples of the world are involved in the line of the Messiah! We eliminated hundreds and thousands and even millions of people from any possibility of being the Messiah. It really narrows down quite nicely.

Look at Hebrews 11. It is clear in the New Testament that we are talking about the Messiah in the promise to Isaac. Hebrews 11:17, “By faith, Abraham when he offered, was tried or tested, and offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom...” It was not his only son by the way. The word means his unique one. “...of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall they seed be called.” That is a direct quote from Genesis 21:12.

You see, the Bible is very clear. That is a messianic promise. We are looking at the claims of Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the seed of the woman. He is the seed of Shem. He is the

seed of Abraham. He is the seed of Isaac. Let us narrow it down even further. He is also going to be from the line of Jacob and not Esau. This excludes everyone from Jordan—all the Edomites.

In Numbers 24:17-19 there is another title of the Messiah, “I shall see him but not now. I shall behold him but not nigh. There shall come a star.” What does Revelation call Him? The Morning Star. “There shall come a star out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession. Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies. And Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall dominion and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.”

It is from Jacob—not Esau. Esau or Edom is going to be a possession of him. It is getting more limited as we continue our study.

Go to Genesis 49:10. Here we have the great prophecy of Jacob’s sons. There are twelve sons of Jacob who are the fathers and the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. Here we have a prophecy about the future: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah.” Judah is the fourth son of Jacob’s wife, Leah. It is ordered: Ruben, Simeon, Levi, then Judah. The name means praise. “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his knee.” That means coming out of a woman’s womb. “Until Shiloh come.” We have already mentioned that the numerical quality of that name is the same as *Masheach*. “And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” The Messiah is going to come from Judah. That eliminates all the other eleven tribes.

Turn to Hebrews 7 for a biblical confirmation of this. Although the genealogy in Matthew 1 would also do it, we read this in Hebrews 7, “It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. It is yet far more evident for after the

similitude or likeness of Melchizedek there arises another priest who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, thou art a priest forever out of the order of Melchizedek.” By the way, all the rabbis say that verse in Psalm 110:4 is referring to the Messiah.

He is from the tribe of Judah, and the New Testament confirms that that is a prophecy of who Jesus is. So, what have we learned so far? The Messiah is the seed of the woman, the seed of Shem, the seed of Abraham, the seed of Isaac, the seed of Jacob, and the seed of Judah. That narrows things down rather rapidly. Amen!

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

Christ is the seed of Shem. He is the seed of Abraham. He is the seed of Isaac. He is the seed of Jacob. He is the seed of Judah. Now there is a family among all the families of Judah. Turn to Isaiah 11, which is another messianic passage. He is from the family of Jesse. Isaiah 11:1 says, “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch.” The rabbis say the word branch is a technical name for the Messiah. “And a branch shall grow out of his roots.” As we know, the branch is mentioned many times and refers to our Lord. “The Spirit of the Lord will be upon Him...” and so forth. You can read the verses that follow. I would also note verse 10 as being particularly important as well, “That in that day there will be a root of Jesse which will stand for in sight of the people and to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious.” He will bring peace.

Romans 15:12 is an interesting verse as it talks about our Lord and says, “And again Isaiah saith, ‘There shall be a root of Jesse and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles trust.’” So, Paul confirms the messianic usage of that passage in Romans 15:12.

Now Christ came out of the family of Jesse. Jesse has eight sons, and the one that is going to be the ancestor of the Messiah was certainly not their first choice at all. Have you ever noticed how often God skips over the first born son, which is the most likely choice. Who was born first between Isaac and Ishmael? Ishmael. Who was born first between Jacob and Esau? Esau. Who was born first in the sons of Jacob? Ruben. Which means, behold the son! Ah, it is a boy—it is a good name. Call him: Ah-it-is-a-boy. It is interesting how often God skips over the first born.

Now here we have Jesse, “Have you seen our, Elia? He is so tall and good looking and handsome.”

Samuel says, “No not the one.”

“Oh, his brother?” (Number two in line.) A little difficult with the second son, but here he is. He goes through the whole line.

“No, none of these. Are these all you have?”

“Oh, we have this little ruddy kid out there taking care of sheep, but oh no, you don’t mean him.”

“Yeah, we want that one.” Do not despise the day of small things.

Sometimes when Hollywood presents King David in any of the stories, they have this unbelievable, gigantic person with muscles. I do not believe in that picture of David at all. He is a ruddy little kid, though he did great things. It is funny to me really that we cannot have a little scrawny, wimpy guy handling a lion and a bear and so Hollywood has got the Schwarzenegger type taking on the bear. Some people actually believe the reason that he could not get Saul's armor on was due to the fact that his muscles were bulging and all of that. Are you kidding? Saul was the muscular one. Saul was extremely handsome and good looking in appearance and had, he was taller than anybody else. They have this all wrong. David was a little shepherd kid, and the reason that he could not wear the armor is that he could turn around several times in it. It was too big for him! It was hanging all over him. Is it not wonderful to realize that little is much when God is in it?

It was a little boy's lunch that fed the 5,000—not because McDonald's offered to cater it. When God has a little, He can use it. God saves by few, not by many. I think a lot of us get intimidated by the images of greatness that are in our minds as to who is really going to be used mightily of the Lord. God takes ordinary men and women and does extraordinary things through them. He has always done that. And so we should never look down on anyone. God may be using the person sitting next to you in a way that you could never possibly dream. Maybe the next Billy Graham is sitting next to you. Who knows? "Is it I, Lord? Is it I?" I think we already had that syndrome years ago, but you just let the Lord use you and He will. He will do great things in your life, though not because of your great faith in God, but because it is faith in a great God. You should know the difference between those two things because it will help you in your life.

Too much emphasis has been placed on man and his ability to really believe great and mighty things. It sounds like we are right back in a Word of Faith church. No, that is not the issue. The

issue is who God is, and God makes it so significant. He said, “If you had the faith of a grain of mustard seed, you could say to that mountain, be removed and it would be removed.” When was the last time you moved a mountain? So apparently your faith is more dinky than that.

I never quite understood this principle until one day when I was walking back from Lazarus’s tomb—from Bethany—on that little road back to the bus. Then the guide said to me, “Hey, You remember that story about the mustard seed?”

I said, “Yeah.”

He said, “There is a big mustard plant over here.”

I said, “Oh I would love to see that.”

He said, “Okay. It’s growing over the fence here.”

So we went and got that mustard seed. He pulled one of those little seeds off. And I said, “Boy you can really see what Jesus said.” He looked at me. No, no, no. He is not a Christian, but Jewish. Anyway he was talking to me. He said, “That’s not what He meant.”

I said, “I thought you brought me over here to see it.”

He said, “That’s not what He’s referring to.” He says, “Hang on.” He took his finger and he smashed that little pebble and inside it were thousands of specks. One of those little specks was what Jesus was talking about. That was very humbling. Then the guide walked on as if he had really conquered the day, but he missed the whole point. I never forgot it. If you have the faith of even a speck of mustard seed, you could say to a mountain, “Be moved.”

Was Christ telling us about the great exploits we could do? No, He is talking to you about how great God is. He is not really dependent on your faith. You see it comes out totally different than what people are saying. Do you think God is wringing His hands in heaven, sweating today and waiting for you to believe Him so that He can operate? No. God can do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ever ask or think. He does not have to use you. He used Balaam's donkey. He could use you—He can use anything. He can have the stones cry out if He wants to. It is best that you not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.

Understand that God, because of who He is, is able to do extraordinary things through just one person's life. That is certainly the lesson of King David.

By the way, when you go to Israel, I suggest not ragging on David. We are talking about being killed for a very valid reason. If you walk down the street, especially in the new city, there is the King David Hotel, the King David Cleaners, the King David Deli, and the King David Bakery. If you go down to see the McDonald's, the name of it is McDavid's. This is true. If you get a hamburger in Jerusalem, it is McDavid's, and you will not see any ham sandwiches there either.

But isn't it interesting how God took a little tiny shepherd boy, the least important in his family, and he became Israel's greatest king and the one whose name also becomes the name of the Messiah. For the Messiah Himself is called David. Do not tell me that you did not know that? The Hebrew letters mean beloved one. This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The Messiah has always been *ben David*—"The son of David." He is David and that is why the Messiah is called, long after David's life, "David my servant." He is my "beloved one." It is really a special thing.

There is so much about David that one hardly knows where to start. Let us go to 1 Samuel 16 to get a reminder in all of our hearts of that wonderful story of God selecting that little shepherd boy. There is so many great things about David's life that show you how God works with a few to conquer the many. Do you remember Goliath? He appears to be about 9 feet tall and scaring the daylights out of everybody. David called him an uncircumcised Philistine. Who does he think he is? He is a little shepherd boy that cannot even wear Saul's armor. He takes a sling shot, saying, "Don't worry. He's defiled the armies of Israel. He's blaspheming God. Hey, I'll tell you I'll have him for lunch." You can see all the soldiers laughing at him because he is a little kid. "Hey, let him go out and kill himself. Who cares?"

So David picks up five stones from the ground. Do you not think that somebody thought at that time, "Hey, if you're so brave why don't you just take one?" Have you ever wondered why he took five because he got him on the first shot? Well, if you read your Bible you will notice that he had four brothers. It is true that there were four other giant brothers. King David was going for the whole family. I love it that God could take that little shepherd boy and use him for great things.

You know when He built an army, it was only 600 guys against hundreds of thousands. You would think that the those 600 were the top guys in Israel? Are you kidding? The Bible says they were in debt, and they were depressed and discouraged. They were the motliest crew of people that nobody wanted. He took 600 rejected men and built them into the finest military machine the world had ever seen. Why? Because God takes the few. Do not despise the day of small things the Bible says.

In 1 Samuel 16 we have that whole story and it is pretty great. In verse 6, I mentioned about Elia, the oldest son. He said, surely the Lord's anointed is before him. And what did God say? Look not on his countenance, on the height of his stature. Because I have refused him. The Lord seeth not as man seeth. For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

You are never going to fool God. God sees your heart and he knows whether you have a heart for Him or not. We make a lot of mistakes in life and do a lot of things that makes the world think of us as rejects, but God sees your heart. Though you may have blown it a dozen times, God knows your heart and He is looking for people that have a heart for Him. You say, "I can't be like so and so." Do not even compare yourself because all you need is a heart for God. Do not ever look on outward appearance because God looks on the heart.

As you know David was ruddy and had all of the beautiful countenance and goodness to look at. He was a handsome kid. The Lord said, "Arise anoint him for this is he." And Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren.

Turn over to Psalm 89:20, God said, "I have found David My servant. With my holy oil have I anointed him." Look at Psalm 89:35, "Once have I sworn by My holiness. I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before us." What wonderful promises these are.

Go to Psalm 132:11. The Lord has sworn in truth unto David that He will not turn from it. "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Rabbis call it the greatest theological problem in Israel because later in Israel's history a man in that line Jeconiah was cursed by God that a man born of his line would never sit on the throne. Yet God's promise to David is, "Of the fruit of thy

body will I set upon the throne.” Jeconiah was in the line of David through Solomon and was cursed. How can we ever have a Messiah to sit on the throne? A Jewish rabbi who is from Beverly Hills has written me a long letter on this one verse here. He said, it is impossible for us to ever have a Messiah due to the curse of God. It is interesting to say the least.

Yet God had a different plan. The fruit of David’s body could also be through another son. His son Nathan, and Mary was in that line. So from the fruit of David’s own body, a Messiah did truly come. He came out of the womb of a woman in David’s line. He could not have come out of the womb of a woman in Solomon’s line because it was cursed. Yet in order to avoid the curse (for all the curse said is that a man cannot be born of that line) all you have to do to solve that problem is to have Mary marry someone who is in the line of Solomon. Then that man would adopt Jesus as his legal heir, and He becomes the heir to the throne. That is exactly what happened. Joseph is in the line of Solomon.

Now out of all of the sons of David there was just going to be one that God would choose. David had 17 children, but God chose Solomon. Do you know what really amazes me? Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba, but he was not the fruit of their adultery. Solomon was the fruit of their marriage. Isn’t that interesting? The baby died, but God then blessed them and gave them Solomon and Jedediah, meaning the Lord loves him. What a beautiful thing to have the name Bathsheba. She was not Jewish, but she is in the line and she received a Jewish name: *Bath* means, “daughter of the oath” and *Sheba* means, “God’s promise.” His covenant will not change. It is really something, isn’t it? In Matthew 1, she is listed in the line of the Messiah and I think that it is fantastic.

Some people believe that she is Jewish. I know this is going to upset some of you. Yet there is a big argument about that. Through the chronologies you can prove that her grandfather was Ahithophel, the one who betrayed David. Maybe that will help you to understand that whole story. Apparently that granddad was still carrying a root of bitterness towards David for what he had done.

A lot of people say, “Wait a minute now. He’s got all these wives. What is all of this? I don’t understand. Who’s his real one? And what about Abigail? And what about...?” And on and on it goes. You know, you are wasting your time. If we had written this story instead of God, we would have had David with only one wife. David would never have had any problems, and we would have had him as the best looking guy in Israel. We would have had him built real tall. Speak eloquently. And probably even have him as a rock star. But no, God tells the story as it is. God tells the truth.

What does that teach us? Rahab the prostitute married in the messianic line, and how about Tamar? That was incest with her father-in-law! They are on in the messianic line too. What does that tell you? It tells me that God is a God of grace and forgiveness. What does it tell you? God tells the true story. And it was no problem to God’s grace and forgiveness to have Gentile women in the line, or even all of these problems of morality, because God’s wonderful grace can cover it. It’s amazing really.

Go to Micah 5. We see that it is going to get nailed down even tighter. David then Solomon. Now we have to have him be born in the city of David. They say at the time of Jesus that there was probably no more than four or five thousand people in the city of Bethlehem. That is what you

call narrowing it down. Today there is only 40 or 50 thousand. Most of them are probably Arabs and now more Muslim than they have ever been. It used to be a Christian Arab town.

Micah 5:2 says, “But thou Bethlehem Ephrata.” Why does it say “Ephrata”? Because there are two Bethlehems. Ephrata is the one just south of Jerusalem about five miles. “Thou Bethlehem Ephrata.” Why mention that? Well, Rachel died on the way to Bethlehem Ephrata, and she continues to weep for her children, said the Bible, when Herod killed all the babies in Bethlehem. Rachel was barren and cried like crazy that God would give her a son. And He gave her two: Joseph and Benjamin. Now there is a beautiful typology there with Rachel weeping for her children. Did you know that Rachel’s tomb is there? When you come down that road from Jerusalem, often the tour groups will stop because there is a little monument to Rachel. Exactly where it happened. Years ago on the way to Bethlehem Ephrata.

Very near that place is a sign that says, “*Migdol Eder*.” *Migdol* is a watch tower, and there are of course a lot of them all over Israel still standing, but it was a very important monument in ancient times because it guarded your property. You could see a long ways and see if anybody was coming to attack you. Now the word *Eder* is the word for flock or sheep. Thus the sign meant, “a tower of sheep.”

Why is this Bethlehem Ephrata so important? When they were doing temple sacrifices—prior to the destruction of the temple in AD 70—all of the special sheep used in the sacrifices were raised in Bethlehem. You can cut straight across the hills and you are right up to Jerusalem. In fact, you can see Jerusalem from some of the hills there very easily. You see, the sheep have to be without blemish and without spot, and so they have to be very carefully bred. The sheep that were sold to all the visitors who came to Passover and they came from tall the nations of the world, cause

every Jewish male 20 years old had to attend the feast. And they have got to have sacrifices. They cannot bring their sheep hundreds of miles across the snows and all of that. And so they're going to buy them there. And the sheep that they sell for temple sacrifices are born, bred, raised in Bethlehem.

And they are all killed on Mount Moriah. When Abraham offered his son, he was on Mount Moriah. And right before he was going to put that knife in him, God stopped him, and said, "God will provide Himself as a lamb." And he looked in the thicket and there was a ram he could offer in sacrifice. The symbolism here is great.

Is it not interesting that *Yeshua* was born where all the sacrificial lambs were born and died where all the sacrificial lambs died? You can not help but miss that.

In Micah 5:2 it says, "Thou Bethlehem Ephrata though thou be little among the thousands." Look at how the messianic prophecies are narrowing down the possibilities. Bethlehem? Why there are thousands of other cities in Judah. Why that little crummy place? Yet "out of thee..." What does Bethlehem mean? Bethlehem means "house of bread." *Beth* means "house" and *Lehem* means "bread." Christ is the bread of life. God chose very carefully where He had Him come out of and it was the city of David—the city representing the bread of life. "Though thou be little out of thee shall come forth unto Me He that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Apparently He did not just begin as a baby in Bethlehem.

Now everybody that has Micah open, please look carefully back to 4:8. Remember I told you about *migdol eder*? Here is where the context begins. Micah 4:8, "And thou *migdol eder*, oh tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come." What? The

first dominion, the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. What it is talking about is little Bethlehem Ephrata where the sheep were raised and born, the tower of the flock was there. “And unto thee will come this one who is going to have dominion and kingdom that will be an everlasting kingdom.” It will come to a daughter of Jerusalem, which is what Bethlehem was always seen as because it is just five miles south. You see, friends, right here we have a play on a situation. Today we know that was the ancient tower of the flock, *migdol eder*. We know unto that little place will come the One who will rule His people Israel, the Messiah Himself. These are tremendous prophecies!

We know that He is going to be born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14 says, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.” The sign of the covenant to David is a virgin birth. “The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive.”

Many of you have heard that the Hebrew word for virgin is *almah*. Now many people who translated modern English Bibles do not know this, but the word virgin in is Isaiah 7:14. Instead of virgin they translate it as “a young woman” or “a maid.” Now there are three Hebrew words that could apply to a woman in this context. One of them definitely means a married woman and it is not used here. It could not have been used here, because Mary was not married when the Messiah was born. Now the word that is used, *almah*, can refer to a woman of marriageable age. That is, it can refer to a woman who is married or is not married. Let me put it to you another way. If I wanted to say virgin in Hebrew, *almah* is the only word that I could use. It does not always mean virgin, but it is the only word I can use.

Now why do we know that these modern English have deliberately tried to undermine the virgin birth? Because in Matthew 1:22 and 23, which quotes Isaiah 7:14, the word *almah* is translated

parthenos in Greek. *Parthenos* can only mean “virgin.” It cannot mean anything else. In Athens when you visit one of seven wonders of the ancient world, on top of the Acropolis you will find the Parthenon—the temple dedicated to virgins. The word can only mean virgin. We know that the meaning of Isaiah 7:14 is virgin. You cannot have a Messiah who is not born of a virgin. That would be impossible.

Do any candidates want to step forward and be interrogated and investigated? Boy, this is narrowing down. But you know the Messiah has to be born before the tribe of Judah lost its tribal identity. When did they lose their tribal identity? In AD 70, when Rome destroyed Jerusalem. You have to have the Messiah before that because “the scepter will not depart from Judah, not a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come.”

Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. In Luke 21:20-24, He said, “When you see Jerusalem compassed with armies then know that the desolation there is nigh. This is the days of vengeance and distress and they will be trodden down of the Gentiles and they will be led away captive to all nations.” The tribal identity and location is going to be changed.

According to Genesis 49:10 it cannot be until the Messiah comes. You see, whoever the Messiah is, He has to come before AD 70. I brought this up over and over again to my Jewish friends, and it is interesting that Jewish rabbis of the past also taught this. He had to come before AD 70.

Were there any others claiming to be the Messiah before AD 70? Most definitely. There were many of them. From the time of the Maccabees clear until the time of Jesus, there were a lot of messianic expectations. They wanted to conquer Rome and get rid of them. They were looking for a Messiah. Some of the sects of Judaism were organized around the coming Messiah. The Zealots were those who believed the Messiah would have us take up arms and fight to deliver it.

They saw Armageddon there; they saw their role there; they were zealots. Remember that Jesus had a zealot among His disciples.

Not only that, but the Messiah had to come while the second temple is still standing. You say, “What’s this all about?” Turn to Zechariah 11. Now the second temple, the one that Herod the Great built, must be present when the Messiah comes. In Zechariah 11:12-13 it says, “I said unto them, if you think good give me my price and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.” That prophecy, we know in the New Testament, is applied to Jesus and the betrayal by Judas Iscariot.

Now friends, how in the world can you have the fulfillment of that prophecy if the house of the Lord was destroyed, which it was in AD 70? Let me put it to you another way. Look at the last book of the Old Testament. We looked at in a previous discussion about the Angel of the Lord and it says, “Behold I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me and the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to His temple” (Malachi 3:1). Now wait a minute, Zechariah and Malachi are prophesying after the destruction of the Solomonic temple. There was not any another temple until the Herodian era. It was just a reconstruction project under Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and Joshua. The second temple is Herod’s, and we have to have the Messiah coming into that temple.

Interestingly, this passage is in the New Testament when Jesus came to the temple and knocked over the money changers and hit them with scourges and got them out of there. This prophecy

was being fulfilled according to the New Testament. The second temple would have to be still standing for those prophecies to be fulfilled.

We are really narrowing this down, are we not? The Messiah also has to be cut off. He has to be killed before the second temple, and this is one where the Jews raise up their hands and say, “Oh you Christians! You Christians. You’re nuts.” No, we are not nuts because the Bible says so. Daniel 9 says that the Messiah would be cut off. Zechariah also speaks of the wounds of the Messiah. Where did you get these wounds? The Messiah will be cut off. Zechariah 12:10, says that “they will look on Him whom they have pierced.”

I like to say sometimes to my Jewish friends, “Please explain to me, which person has died, has been beaten up, has been marred beyond recognition as Isaiah says? So badly that you couldn’t even tell who he was? Tell me, what person in history has done that?” And it all happened before the second temple! Wow.

It is interesting, that the Messiah has to be a prophet, a priest, a judge, and a king. He has to be the prophet. In Deuteronomy 18, God said, “I will raise up a prophet just like Moses and his word you shall hear.” When the Father’s voice came out from heaven, this is “My beloved Son, hear Him”—listen to Him. These prophecies are quoted in the New Testament to refer to Jesus.

He is also to be a priest, but He was not in the line of the priests. He was in the line of Judah because He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is not a priest after the order of the Levites. He is greater than they are!

He has to be a judge. The passages that support this are everywhere in the Old Testament. He is going to come and judge the world, and yet, the New Testament says that “the Father has committed all judgment into the hands of the Son.” It even says that the believers will be judged for their rewards and that they will stand before the judgment seat of the Messiah. The Messiah is to be the judge! Psalm 2 says, “He will judge the world so severely, He will crush them with a rod of iron.” And Isaiah says, “He will trample them under His feet, for I am come to judge all the nations of the world.” Jesus even said in Matthew 25 that “the Son of Man will sit on the throne and judge all the nations of the world”—those that are the goat nations will go into everlasting fire, and those that are the sheep nations will go into the everlasting kingdom. He is the judge.

He is also the king. Over and over again the Scriptures speak of Christ being the King. “Behold your king cometh.” Who is this Lord of glory who comes? Psalm 24 answers the question. Now, the Bible is filled with references to the fact this person be a prophet, He must be a priest, He must be a judge. He must be a king. Who is this one?

Turn to Isaiah 35. I know a lot of you are hoping on the final exam it will just say, who is the Messiah? And you can write down Jesus then say, “Amen.” Well, I assure you that there will be a bit more than just that.

One of the most marvelous things about the Messiah, which Jewish teachers do know and speak of frequently is that He will do miracles of healing. We call these the credentials of the Messiah. Remember that we started with John 20:30-31, “These signs are written that you may believe that *Yeshua* is *ha Masheach*, and in believing you would have life through His name.” The miracles were intended to point to who the Messiah is.

Let us look at this. Isaiah 35:4ff. says, “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong. Fear not. Behold your God will come with vengeance. Even God with a recompense. He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.” Did Jesus heal a blind man? Yes, that is point one. “The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.” Did He ever do that? Yes, the lame man shall leap as a hart. Did He heal a lame man? Tell him to rise and walk? Yes! “The tongue of the dumb sing.” Did He ever loosen the tongue of a dumb man? Yes! “For in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool of the thirsty lands, springs of water: in the habitations of dragons, where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes and a highway shall be there.” He is speaking about the messianic era that will come, but notice the one that comes, you had better check him out. Did He heal a blind man? Did He heal a deaf person? Did He heal a lame person? Did He heal the tongue of the dumb person who could not speak?

Now when you read the New Testament and the miracles, they will take on new meaning to you because we know that all His miracles are not recorded. John says that it would be impossible to fill all the books of the world with what He did. Well, why were the ones chosen? Because they prove that He is the Messiah. They were the ones that demonstrated that He will do exactly what these passages indicate.

The Messiah will save us from our sins. Now this last one many people do not want to believe. The Messiah is going to be resurrected from the dead. Well, they do not want a dead Messiah and they certainly do not believe in the resurrection. But what was the theme of all the apostles preaching? Remember they were all Jews. What was the one thing on which they kept focusing? It was the resurrection. Now, where did they get this?

According to Acts 2, Peter quoted Psalm 16. Now I want you to follow this one carefully because it is a little tricky. Psalm 16:8-11:

I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Now many people say that David is merely talking about himself there—the fact that he will be resurrected. Did his body see corruption? Sure. Let us go to Acts 2 and watch what Peter says. This is why people could not deny it—a little known fact that is nestled here in Acts 2:

For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of

the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Now that is pretty spectacular! You see the New Testament confirms that the Messiah had to resurrected from the dead. Did you know that in the Jewish rabbinical literature of the past on Psalm 16, that they actually say that the holy one is referring to the Messiah who will never see bodily decay? That cannot be King David. His sepulcher is with us to this day, as it sits there by the way on Mount Zion. You can even visit it. Psalm 16 undeniably refers to Jesus and there is no doubt about it. Let us pray.

Father, thank You for Your wonderful Word. Thank You for these glorious prophecies and the reminder that Jesus is the Messiah—the Savior of the world. Lord, we worship Your Son, our Savior, our coming King. I pray that we will grow and continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be all the glory and praise. And it is in His name that we pray. Amen.

Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the privilege that we have to study and to learn more about our blessed Lord. We pray that our deliberations this day will cause us to love, worship, and adore Him more. We also pray that we will understand that there is no other name by which we can be saved. Thank You, Lord, for what You are going to do in the precious name of our Messiah—our wonderful Lord. Amen.

I do not know how many of you know about Jewish cabalism. Cabalism in Judaism is the effort to see hidden things in the Bible, and what cabalistic Jews do is they use computers to examine the appearance of names and information that is in sequential order. For instance, every twenty-first letter in the text throughout a whole chapter spells something. Or every seventh letter throughout a book spells something. A lot of people have great questions about this because you can almost see anything you want. For instance, almost everything about the Holocaust including Adolph Hitler's name, his date of birth and death, and all of that is seen in the Scriptures using this method.

It sort of seems like a game though. There are certain aspects of it that I am not sure about, but I do know that scientists who perform the decoding have not only looked at this but have examined it in great detail. In fact it has even been in scientific journals. The Old Testament portion of the Bible was written in Hebrew, and they have taken other Hebrew books, including the

Encyclopedia of Judaica, and all kinds of books and have never found this type of coding at all, yet in the Bible it is everywhere.

One of the most interesting things is the name of our Lord—*Yeshua*. It is found everywhere throughout the Bible. It begins in the book of Genesis and ends in the book of Malachi. It is very interesting because it is everywhere. It is all over Isaiah 53 as well. Now, if you take the letters and organize them, like all first letters, then all second letters, and then all third letters *et cetera* (which they do sometimes), computers will read them down in columns and it yields *Yeshua ha Masheach* (“Jesus is the Messiah”). It is so powerful that there is currently a book that is being released in Israel in Hebrew (without an author’s name on it). This book’s intent is to expose the hidden secrets of the Bible, which are going to expose this. The reason why some people are very upset about it is because in the book it constantly mentions that *Yeshua* is frequently identified as the Messiah in the Old Testament by means of this method.

Now again, we do not want to jump on that. The Bible says what it says. Sometimes you can ask, “Why go to every seventh letter. Why didn’t you choose every eighth letter? And why not every twelfth letter?” There is too much information there.

For instance, all sixty-six major rabbinical teachers of Jewish history have their names and the dates included in the text by using this method. There is just a lot of interesting things that it is hard to figure. Did God intend this? But it is also a little weird because shortly after the time of Jesus and the apostles, the great school called Origen’s School (or the School of Alexandria, Egypt) got into the same kind of thing in terms of the hidden meanings of the New Testament text. They became very allegorical, and it is interestingly that down in Alexandria, Egypt,

because of all that kind of junk, they became one of the hot beds of denying the deity of Jesus Christ.

I have always said, “When common sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.” It is very important because the Bible was written for our admonition. I think the first letter of each word would be extremely important since Jews do read their poetry that way, yet outside of that, I wonder whether we should be doing this or not. It is also a fact that the name *Yeshua* is everywhere throughout the Scripture by using that method, even though a person would say to you that His name is not mentioned at all in the Bible. His name is there if you take a sequential look at every fortieth letter or so and it spells something out to you.

The British Society, who has taken this under advisement in their decoding sections of their archaeological studies, have said that there is not one single book in the history of the world that has this decoding factual information that the Bible has. They are very fascinated by it, even though the ones who are doing the study are all agnostics. It is just an interesting thing.

What I am trying to say here, as we begin our study of Jesus’ deity, is that we are not going to look for any hidden or unusual tricky things. We do not need to do that because the Bible flat out proves that He is God. That is what we are going to deal with. It is amazing to me that many Christians are ignorant of these things, and therefore, are not prepared to give and answer for the reason of the hope that lies within them when they are questioned by people—especially cultists, or the average person on the street. The evidence is overwhelming.

Monday my wife and I were sitting in Benjie’s, our favorite Jewish restaurant, and a gentleman was in the booth next to us sharing Christ with a businessman. It was a delight to hear him. We

just kept quiet and listened, and it was really neat as the Christian businessman was sharing. He was talking to this other businessman who did not know anything about the Bible, not even that Jesus is God. To much of my joy, the Christian went through verses that I am going to give you today. He got prepared, and about half way through the man says, “What are you trying to say? That Jesus is God?” “Yes, that is what I am trying...” “You mean to tell me, He’s God?!” Everybody in the restaurant is looking, and the Christian said, “Just let me show you a few more.” He just kept at it, and this man was just blown away. He did a very good thing that you all ought to do in witnessing. He said, “Please don’t believe me. Here, you just read that yourself.” He kept doing that and this guy obviously had not read the Bible. “In - the - beginning - was - the Word,” stumbling through the text as he read because he was not really familiar with it. Now, I just sat there and my heart just leaped for joy. May God give us all the understanding of it so that we can sit down with anybody, no matter who they are, or what they know, and tell them what the truth is from the Bible about our blessed Lord. It is really crucial. Is it not?

John 1 is where we want to start. You need to remember that John is very Jewish. Now ninety percent of John’s Gospel does not appear in Matthew, Mark and Luke. You might want to make a note to yourself. They call Matthew, Mark and Luke the synoptic gospels. *Optic* means “eye,” or “to see,” and *syn* is the Greek preposition “with.” Synoptic means “to see with each other,” and that is why they are called the synoptic Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke have a lot of parallelism and a lot of the same stories, but when you come to John there is ninety percent of the book not found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. What are some of the possible reasons for this?

First, John was the closest to Jesus and though he does not mention his name, he is the unnamed disciple whom Jesus loved and who leaned on His breast at the Last Supper. John is also with Peter and James in those special times like at the Mount of Transfiguration, and so he knew a lot

of things that perhaps the others did not know. Also, remember at the time of the cross, Jesus committed the care of His mother to John. This means that he would have learned a lot more than others had by just taking care of Jesus' mother the rest of her life. By the way, both of their tombs are in the city of Ephesus. John wound up in Ephesus after being released from his imprisonment on the Isle of Patmos, and that is where he died. He took care of Jesus' mother, and both of their grave sites are there in Ephesus still to this day.

Second, John outlives the other apostles. He saw a lot of things happen, and, as a matter of fact, he was quite a young man when he was hanging around Jesus. Many believe that he was a lot younger than Jesus. Now, Jesus was approximately around thirty and John could have been in his early twenties perhaps, yet we know that he dies as an old man around AD 95. Now John lived the longest and saw the church go through those opening sixty years or so. There were a lot of struggles and he also saw the destruction of Jerusalem. He saw the Jews scattered around the world and saw the heresies develop on the deity of Christ. There are a lot of reasons why John, being the closest to Jesus, taking care of his mother, living the longest, and the only one who died a natural death, wrote so much differently than the other synoptic Gospels.

By the way, we have the writings of men who studied under John. For instance, the great pastor at Smyrna, Polycarp, whose story of his execution at the stake is a marvelous story. Polycarp wrote a beautiful epistle to Philippians. If you read it you will notice that it sounds just like Scripture and the reason for that is that he quotes voluminously from Paul's letter to the Philippians. The early writers hardly ever give their own opinion when they were talking to you. They just say, "Grace and mercy be unto you. And I thank God upon every remembrance of you." They just quote the Scripture, "And you can be confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. And I thank God for your fellowship in

the gospel from the first day until now.” “Do not forget that Paul’s bonds in Christ were made known unto all the palace, and so there is no reason to really be afraid. As a result a lot of the brethren are becoming much bolder and have become much more active in their faith. So do not worry about persecution.” You read that and you find that there are just a few additions to the epistle to the Philippians, and that is the way that they wrote.

A lot of people do not understand that if we did not have our manuscripts of the Bible, we still could reproduce the New Testament from what we call patristic (i.e. the church fathers) quotations. We have tons of them, and they just quote voluminously from the Bible. You can almost reduplicate the New Testament and especially a lot of the Old.

John had a perspective that the others would not have had. Also, this one will surprise you, the early church, up until about AD 150, never thought of Paul as the theologian. People read Paul and say, “There is theology, man.” Interestingly, the early church honored John as the theologian of the Christian church. He was the number one theologian, because he spoke more about Jesus than anybody else.

Now because he is Jewish and is trying to present things in a Jewish way, he writes as a Jew would write. For instance he uses a lot of contrasts, and Jews love contrasts. Just think of the Proverbs? “The righteous are so and so and the wicked are so and so.” Well, that is the way John writes. He contrasts light and darkness, and love and hate, and righteousness and sin. That is the way he writes and it is very simple Greek. That is why when you take first year Greek they will have you read either out of 1 John or the Gospel of John.

Another interesting thing about John is that he is repetitive, even more than the other writers. Jews often do that—especially rabbinical teachers. They repeat constantly like a catechism method. They just want to make sure you heard what he said. John repeats over and over and over again. There are simple words of the gospel that are used more in John than in all the other gospels combined. For instance, the word “belief.” The very words “faith” and “believe,” are used constantly throughout John. The word, “life,” is used far more than it appears in any of the other three gospels combined. All of these crucial simplistic issues of the gospel, are presented in depth in John.

The other interesting thing about John is that most of the material is on the last week of the life of the Lord. It is interesting how we tell a new convert to read the Gospel of John. Remember various missionary organizations even printed out a little Gospel of John that you can hand to people. Technically, the early church would not have agreed with you, they feel that John was simple with Greek, but contained difficult theology.

There are a lot of things that are hard to understand. When you read the opening chapter, “In Him was life and that life was the light of men which lights every man that comes in the world.” There is some play on things that are really difficult to understand, but John is the theologian, and it is John who brings out the issue of the deity of Jesus Christ. He saw the struggles that were taking place. Just a few years after Jesus and Paul, you have a war over who Jesus is, and this war still goes on! It is the battle of Christianity and that is who is Jesus. Who is He really?

There are two main issues about Jesus that we are in the midst of and that need to be addressed by pastors and churches and Bible study leaders. There are two main issues about Jesus. First, He is

the Messiah, which is being ignored. We are not taking the time to prove to people that He is *ha Masheach*, and we have dealt with that up to this class time.

The second issue is the deity of Christ—that He is Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament. This is very hard to believe. We have one out of every five people in the world who are monotheistic and say that Allah (the name out of a pagan cultic group which Mohammed picked up) is the one true God and Mohammed is his prophet. We have the Jews who, of course, are monotheistic. And Christianity is also monotheistic, but we mess people's minds up because we have led people to believe that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three gods. Now, there are not three gods. There is only one God. There never has been another one, but we believe (and this is based upon material that we read in the New Testament that we are going to get in to) that the Bible identifies the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus, all three of them, as being the one God. They are three distinct persons in one Triune God.

Here is the interesting thing. There is more evidence about Jesus being God than there is that the Father or the Spirit is God. Is that not interesting? People make a lot of assumptions. There is only a couple of passages that actually call the Father God. The Holy Spirit, as far as I know, only is treated as God in one passage and it is a parallelism. In Acts 5:3-4, Peter said, "You have not lied to men but to God." The next verse, "You have lied unto the Holy Spirit." There is the identification in a parallel statement, but there is not that much evidence. Now, you can get evidence by attributes and claims and works and miracles, but I am speaking of direct statements here.

Concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, we have direct statements. This is what certain cultic groups say is not found in the Bible. Let us take a look at it and see if it is found in the Bible or not.

Before I begin, I am aware of the fact that when you have been exposed to Jehovah Witness' teaching, it is like it is the number one issue that we are talking about. I would just like it for us to play it cool on that. I will refer to it from time to time, but I want you to understand that we are not teaching you that Jesus is God to handle your Jehovah Witness contacts. The truth of the matter is that most of the people in the world who even honor Him and recognize Him as existing and being a teacher, do not believe that He is God. Our job involves everybody. I do not believe a person can be saved apart from the fact that Jesus is God—at all! We will show you that because it is very important. Because the Jehovah's Witnesses follow a translation that you might spend more time debating with them and not know this, but they are following a translation that gives them readings of passages that we will show you that read differently than what your Bible reads.

John 1 is often called the prologue to the Gospel. It is just filled with doctrinal issues related to the deity of Christ. If you have already been through the Gospel of John, then you already know this and can probably even take a nap. John 1:1-18:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was

the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

The idea that verse 11 means that nobody received him is an absolute lie. There were 3,000 Jewish people that received Him on the Day of Pentecost—5,000 men not counting women and children a few days later. Josephus said previous to the destruction of Jerusalem that there were over 100,000 known Christians in Jerusalem. They were all Jews.

There is one more thing. In 1 Timothy 3:16, we have a passage which became a major hymn in the early church. In Paul's writing to Timothy, he says, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." Now those of you without King James are going to see a variation here.

“God was manifest in the flesh.” Both the NIV and NASB leave out the word “God” and translate it as “He.”

Let us go back to John 1. The way that we are going to approach the deity of Christ (which is probably going to take a couple of weeks) is in three major areas. We are going to talk about His names that prove that He is God. Secondly we will move to His attributes. That is, the things that only God can do—things that are not man. Then we will go to His abilities—that is, the things that He has done that prove He is God.

Now when we come to His names, there is an interesting thing about the name that was given to Him in Matthew 1:21. It says that His name shall be called *Yehoshua*, meaning “Yahweh is salvation.” Now many people read that and they say, “Well wait a minute. You could call somebody Jesus today and it is just a testimony to the fact that the Lord will save you. It’s not saying he’s the Lord.” Well, that is an interesting observation, but there is just one problem. He is called the Lord, and we will be looking at that in a moment.

Let us look at how His names prove that He is God. Is He, in fact, contrary to cultic teaching, called God? The answer is yes. First of all, John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word.” Now the word for “word” is *logos* in Greek. Now *logos* is a common English word referring to the study of something. Archaeology has *logos* in the end. Christology, has *logos* in the end—the study of Christ. So that little *logos* or “-ology” on the end of English words, is referring to the study of something. In ancient times the *logos* was a revelation. That is, a display, a putting on display, expressing it so that we can see it. That is very interesting because when John wrote, he certainly wrote with the cultural background of those words that he used. When he said, “In the beginning was the *logos*.” They would not immediately think of Jesus because they would be

thinking of God. “In the beginning was when God started revealing.” That is the way *Barashesh*, or Genesis, begins. “In the beginning God created.” And that was a revelation of the glory of God.

Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare or reveal the glory of God.” So when you read in the beginning was the Word, was the revelation, everyone would go, “Oh yes, yes. You mean the creation. That revealed the nature and power of God.”

But now here is what else it says: “And the *logos* was with God.” Now at that point, you would have to stop and think about what was just said. Actually it is the word *pros* in Greek—the word meaning “toward.” It can tend to mean “face to face.” What we have here is a statement of equality. Now the person hearing this would have heard, “In the beginning was the revelation of God.” Then they would have heard the next statement, “And this revelation was facing God.” It was in equality with God. Now, that would be impossible for the Jewish mind to apprehend and comprehend, because the created is never to be identified with the Creator.

If the first phrase refers to the revelation of the universe, which reveals who God is (which it certainly could), then the second statement therefore, could not make any sense because you cannot have the revelation of that universe on an equal basis with the one who created it. In fact, that is the root of all idolatry. In Romans 1 it says that man worships the creature rather than the Creator. Let me put it another way. God is never to be identified with that which He created. That is a false doctrine. That is pantheism, which says that God is in everything. That is a big doctrine in the New Age thinking of our day—the Earth Day and occultic type of thinking. New Age thinking is that God is in everything. Talk to your plants because God is in the plants. Well, I do not know whether talking to the plants helps or not, because all I know is that God is not in those

plants. God is not in this desk up here. God is not in this little cup. The interesting problem we have is that according to the Bible, God fills the universe with His presence. He dwells inside of us and in the space in between. Who can flee from His presence? As Psalm 139:7-10 says, “If I ascend into heaven, He is there. If I make my bed in hell, He is there. Where am I going to go? Darkness and light are the same to Him.” There is nowhere that He is not found. He is everywhere at once—at any one moment of time.

So when it says that the Word, the revelation, was with God, all it did was personalize it. Now if you have a Jewish mind or a monotheistic mind, you say, “Wait a minute. How can you have a revelation that’s on an equal par with God? It doesn’t make sense.”

If that was troubling, imagine hearing the third phrase. By the way, “the *Logos* was God.” So it reads, “In the beginning was the *Logos*, the revelation.” Most people would be thinking Creation. Remember that Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that He is a created being. Knowing this will help you to understand what they try to do with the text. “In the beginning was the revelation, the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was on an equal par (face to face with God), and the *Logos* was God.”

Have you lost your mind? Now the Jehovah’s Witness will tell you that there is no definite article in front of the word “God.” It does not say, “The Word was the God,” and it just means, “The Word was a God.” They would say that He is like God, but not the same as God. Now this brings up the usage of the definite article (“the”) in Greek. When it is in the text, it does what we call identifies or specifies. That is why this would be illogical to have “the God” here. Why? It means the God among other gods. There are no other Gods. So there is no purpose of identifying or specifying the God. Just say “God.” Now when the definite article is left out in front of a word, it indicates that it is the same in nature, substance, and being. Therefore, leaving the definite article

out, contrary to the Jehovah's Witnesses argument, is the stronger view on the deity of Christ than if the definite article was there. It says that the revelation was, in fact, God in essence, substance, and being. It is a powerful statement that He is called God in John 1:1.

Now we know that this revelation (*Logos*) was also a person because 1:14 says that He was made flesh. He literally became flesh, which we will discuss later. He was not made flesh, but became flesh. The word *ginomai* in Greek refers to a change of condition. It means that He was in existence previously, and He became flesh. So what He was before was flesh. "God is Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth." The second person of the Triune God became flesh and dwelt among us. He became a man, and this is the heart of the gospel.

Now, turn to John 20. I am going to want you to know what you are talking about when you try to prove that Jesus is God on the exam.

John 20 occurs after the Resurrection. It is eight days later. Thomas was not there that first night. It is still Sunday night, but a week later. John 20:19 records the evening of the Resurrection, where Jesus showed them His hands and His side. "He breathed on them. Said, receive ye the Holy Spirit."

But Thomas, one of the twelve called Didemus [or Twin, apparently he had a twin brother] was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore, said unto him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said unto them, except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe. (John 20:24)

Before you jump on him so much, remember that his last picture was Jesus on the cross. There was no doubt in his mind, that those nails were in His hands and His feet, and the spear was thrust in His side and blood and water came out. That is the last thing he knew. He said, “What do you mean, you’ve seen the Lord? I was there. He died. If I cannot see Him with the prints—I mean, don’t come to me with some hallucination that’s been cleared up. I want to see it.”

Then verse 26 states, “After eight days again, His disciples were within and Thomas with them this time. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut and stood in the midst.” People say, “Well how could He do that if He has a real physical body?” Well actually, you could if you move fast enough. How many of you took physics in high school? How many of you remember your Physics? Then you would understand that it is possible to move through walls because of the molecular structure. If you knew the molecular structure of the wood of the door and you moved rapidly enough and the molecular structure of your body could be adjusted to it, you could go straight through it. Now, normally that does not happen. I do not recommend that you go outside and try a few doors because you will end up with a headache. Yet for Jesus, of course, it was no problem.

“Peace be unto you, thus saith He to Thomas.” Boy, He did not waste any time, did He? He went right for it. “Reach thither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, thrust it in My side. And be not faithless, but believing.”

I heard a guy on the radio recently say that it does not say they touched his hands and side. In honor of the Lord, they fell at His feet. They would not touch His sacred body. You know, I listened to that and said that it sounded really nice, except for the fact that it is wrong. They did

touch Him; and it was not just Thomas. They all touched Him. You say, “How do you know that?” The answer is over in 1 John 1.

That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled. (1 John 1:1)

You see the Jehovah’s Witness cannot call this resurrection an apparition because of this verse. They do not believe in the Resurrection of the actual, physical body of Jesus.

Do you know there are some evangelical scholars now teaching the same thing because Jesus walks through the door. They say that He is like a ghost or a spirit. No, He is not! He had a real physical body and they touched Him. Would you not touch Him if you were there? I would have, and said, “Hey, it feels like His flesh, you know.”

Do you remember Luke 24? He ate fish and a honeycomb in their presence. He invited them, “Touch Me and see. A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see Me have.” I love to share that with Mormons. I have had more people get confused over that. Do not let them give you their arguments first. You must always give them their arguments.

I sometimes say to them, “Hey, have you guys ever seen an apparition that eats?”

“What are you talking about?”

“You know, like a ghost or something. Have you ever seen them eat a Twinkie or something? Maybe a hamburger?”

They always say, “What are you talking about?”

I say, “Well, you guys believe that Jesus was an apparition after His resurrection and He is eating fish and honeycomb in Luke 24.” Then I say, “Also, you say that He didn’t have flesh and bones and He said that He did. Does that not make you liars and deceivers?” This is what I call the direct approach. “I am not trying to be critical, but Jesus is the one who said He had flesh and bones. So I believe Him. Not you—just for the record.” Sometimes you have to shock people a little bit and wake them up.

In verse 28 we find Thomas’ response to Jesus. It was not “My Lord and my likeness of God.” Nor was it, “My Lord and my beautiful manifestation apparition, the light in my room of God.” He said, “My Lord and my God!” Did Jesus rebuke him for calling Him God? No, He said, “Thomas because you have seen Me you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed.” This is pretty good stuff!

Is Jesus called God? We’ll look at Acts 20:28 after the break.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

While Paul was at Miletus with the elders of the church of Ephesus, he says:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves and unto all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers [or bishops] to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

I love to use this with Jehovah's Witnesses and say, "Did the Father die on the cross?"

They always say, "Well, of course not."

Then I say, "I've got a real problem here. This verse says that God purchased with His own blood. What are we going to do about that?"

They always look at it and look at it. Then they say, "Well, I don't know. It's probably just, you know." They look at it again. "Feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."

How can you get any stronger than that? Yet they say He is not called God in the Bible! Here is a pretty clear example.

Let us look at Romans 9:5, which is one that they do not agree with. By the way, different people translate this differently, but in Romans 9:5, Paul is talking about the promises of God and his burden for Israel. They had the adoption, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the promises, whose are the Father's. The verse says, "And of whom, out of Israel, as concerning the flesh, Messiah came who is over all God blessed forever. Amen."

All God's people said, "Amen!" I know of a guy that is working on proving that Jesus is not God, though he is not yet done. Whether or not he is a Christian, I do not know. He says that he believes it, but I think that he likes being the devil's advocate. Anyway, he tries to get out of this and I basically asked him why Paul would say, "Amen" at that point? He has a lot more to say, and so there must be something really terrific there. Why would he say "amen:" here? It did not seem to make sense because He continues on his argument. Why would he say it? The point is that whatever was just said about the Messiah, gave Paul the response in his heart: "Amen to that! Christ is over all. God blessed forever."

In Greek, it is an apposition, and from that it is hard to run away. An apposition is like the vocative in English (*i.e.*, the case of address). This is where you are simply saying the same thing like, "David, the teacher at Bible College." The phrase, "The teacher at Bible College" in grammar would be the same grammatical construction as David's name because you are referring to him. This is what we have here. We have Christ, who is overall God blessed forever. A lot of guys change it as if it were just an ending: "Blessed be God forever." No, that is not what it says, and it is hard to get out of the grammar of Romans 9:5 because it claims that the Messiah is God.

Here is another one that I have referred to many times in sharing Christ with both Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses:

Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the
great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13)

You say, “Wait a minute. If it has the definite article in there, how does that apply to what you said in John 1:1.” Remember do not try to make something walk on all fours. You have to have the definite article here for another reason that makes the statement more powerful than if it were not there. What am I talking about? This is called Granville Sharp’s Rule. It was named after Granville Sharp, who discovered it. What it means is easy to grasp whether you know Greek or not. When two nouns are connected by “and,” and the definite article (“the”) is preceding the first noun, but not in front of the second noun, it is connecting equals. When you have two nouns connected by the word “and,” and the definite article (“the”) is in front of the first noun but not the second one, it is connecting equals. Now some people say, “How do you know that’s a rule?” There are two-hundred and fifty usages of it in the New Testament and there are no exceptions. That makes a pretty strong rule.

You know, this will help you in other passages. Do you remember that the Bible says that the foundation is the apostles and prophets? It uses Granville Sharp’s Rule. It means that the apostle and prophet are exactly equal in that sense.

Do you remember when it says that the Spirit revealed unto God’s holy apostles and prophets? It is Granville Sharp’s Rule. What does it mean? It means that whether an apostle or prophet, what made them the same was in writing the Scripture. There were other apostles and prophets who never wrote Scripture. Therefore, the foundation is made up of those particular ones who are used by God to write Scripture. I do not mean to bring something else that confuses you and takes you off the track, but there are lots of usages of this that are really fascinating.

“The Great God and our Savior.” There is no definite article in front of the word “Savior.”

Therefore this grammar is connecting equals. The words “God” and “Savior” are referring to the

same person; they are not two persons, even though that is the argument of the Jehovah's Witnesses. If you want to beat them to the punch, say, "Do you guys have any evidence that the heavenly Father is going to return back to this earth on a great white horse exactly like you believe from Titus 2:13?" They will then wonder how you knew that. You see, the Jehovah's Witnesses, in order to get out of this problem, say that both the Father and Jesus are coming back on white horses. The Bible does not say that anywhere else, yet they have to believe that because the word for "appearing" *epiphanea* is that great revelation at the end of the Tribulation. They want the "Great God" to refer to the Father, but Granville Sharp's Rule blows them out of the saddle anyway because it is referring to the Savior as being that God. Jesus is called the Great God in Titus 2:13.

Again when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He sayeth, let all the angels of God worship Him. The angels He makes them spirits and ministers, but unto the God He sayeth, Thy throne, O God is forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. (Hebrews 1:6-7)

By the way, this comes from Psalm 45, which all Jews teach is a messianic psalm. "Thy throne, O God is forever and ever."

My favorite one, however, is 1 John 5:20. This verse is almost inescapable. You really have to twist the Bible to get out of this one:

And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true. (1 John 5:20)

At this point, Jehovah Witness say, “Well, the true one is the Father.” Yet it says, even in His Son Jesus Christ. So it identifies the true one. In the next statement, “This is the true God and eternal life,” the word “this,” is a demonstrative pronoun. A pronoun must agree in gender (meaning masculine, feminine or neuter) and in number (meaning plural or singular), with what it modifies. This demonstrative pronoun is a masculine, singular pronoun. It also must agree, in Greek grammar, with its closest antecedent (*i.e.*, the word before it that is also masculine and singular as a noun). How interesting that the word “Christ” right in front of it, is a masculine, singular noun. This is the true God and that is pretty hard to get out of!

A Jehovah’s Witness teacher whom I dealt with for over two years and is now a fundamental Baptist pastor, said concerning this verse, “Oh, that refers to eternal life.”

I said, “No it doesn’t. Eternal life is feminine. It’s impossible for the pronoun to mean eternal life and you know it.” Jesus is called the Great God in Titus 2:13 and He is called the true God in 1 John 5:20.

Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. The government shall be upon his shoulders. His name shall be called wonderful, counselor, the Mighty God. (Isaiah 9:6)

Now, the “Mighty God” there is not the word *El Shaddai*. That is the Almighty God in Genesis in the Hebrew, but it is not there in Isaiah 9:6. Here it is the word *El Gibbor*, meaning the God of power.

The second thing that we deal with is that He is called the Son of God. How many people have ever told you, “How can He be God if He’s the Son of God?” It is a good question.

The Greek language is very crucial here because it has additional words that we do not use in English. For instance, if you refer to a baby in the womb, or one that just came out of the womb, you call it a *brephos*. A *brephos* is one in the womb. Remember when Paul said to Timothy that “from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures” (2 Timothy 3:14-15). The reason that is so interesting is that it is the word *brephos*, meaning “in the womb.” Do you know that today we know scientifically that the baby in the womb is hearing and responding to what it hears? In all experimentation, the baby can recognize the kind of music it has listened to in the womb after it comes out. It can also identify the voices of people without seeing them. So, years ago, we thought nothing is happening in there. That is why abortion seems so stupid, when you think about it. Trying to act like that is not a real person, when the elements of personality are functioning very definitely as it relates to sounds.

But anyway, “From a baby (*brephos*) in the womb, you have known the Holy Scriptures.” That is why I teach young couples that are pregnant the word of God. Get right down on that tummy and preach God’s Word, saying, “Hey, in there, listen up! You’re a sinner even though you just got in here. You need to be saved!”

I am a little crazy on this I will have to admit. When I got my first grandchild, I was so excited. It was Easter Sunday morning and I had four services that I was preaching. Between the third and the fourth service a guy came up and gave me a note that said I was a grandfather. I was very excited and so that last service was real quick. “We’re just going to shorten up the word here a little bit this morning. I’ve got things to do.” But anyway, I had a basketball under one arm (we are kind of hoop nuts in our house) and a Bible in the other as I went to St. Joseph’s Hospital. All the babies were being shown at one o’clock and so I came walking down the hall with the crowd of people waiting for all the babies to be shown. My oldest son, who is more serious, standing with his mother, my wife, saw me coming with a basketball and a Bible. The son just says, “Oh no. I do not believe this.”

He knew what I was going to do and so I came walking up and say, “Where’s my kid?”

He said, “It’s my kid, Dad.”

“Yeah, yeah, your kid. But it’s my grandson. Where is he?” I said, “Bring him up here.” They moved him up to the little window and I said, “Here hold the basketball.” Then I opened my Bible right in front of that window with all these people standing there and said, “The Bible says, ‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’”

My son and my wife took off the other way because they were so embarrassed. Yet I had a crowd of people that stood around, and so I became more eloquent and said, “We are all sinners, aren’t we? We all need to be saved.” So when people ask me when to start telling your kids about Jesus, I tell them, “Before they come home from the hospital, of course.” Do it even when they are in the womb.

The second word that the Greeks use is *technon*, which is often translated in some of the modern English translations as a little born one. It is a little different than *brephos* in that it does not apply to the baby in the womb. It means one that is recently born, and usually refers to a child up until about two.

At age two, you use the word *nepios*, which means without speech, but making noise. The word used for toddlers in Greek is *nepios*. In Ephesians 4, Paul said, “Do not be children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.” In this context, he used the word *nepios*. In other words, do not be a spiritual toddler. Now toddlers talk and go in all directions, but they do not know what they are doing. They are in to everything, climbing on everything, and blabbering all over the place, but they do not know what they are doing. So watch out that you are not that way spiritually. The *technon* is in between the *brephos* and the *nepios* (around the ages of 0 to 2).

Now Jesus is called the Son of God, and one of the biggest mistakes that is thinking that the word *technon* is used to refer to Him in that manner—that He was born of God. Now the word *technon* is never used of Jesus Christ. Never. That is almost startling, but it is also clearly telling us that He is unique.

The word “Son” that is used is the word, *huios*. Now a *huios* in Greek is one that is an heir. It has nothing to do with whether you are 10 or 8 or 16 or 21 or anything else. It is the one who receives the inheritance and that is what heir means here. That is the word for son, which means that He is the heir of all things. Remember that Romans 8 says that we will be joint-heirs with Christ. That is such a wonderful statement that we are receiving the inheritance as we have been adopted as sons. You can adopt a person who is not your own child and make them a *huios*, an heir. There is

a ceremony to adopt them and they would receive the benefits of your will. It is really fascinating. Jesus is called the Son of God.

Now go to John 5:18 and let us look at the way that they treated that at the time of the Lord. How did they understand the term? It is more important at that time than it is for us looking back nineteen-hundred years.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (John 5:18)

Is that not interesting? They did not interpret the word, “son” as meaning less than. They interpreted it as being equal to. All the inheritance of the Father belongs to the Son. They knew exactly what He said. They are ready to kill Him because He is blaspheming. So it is interesting when you go back and see how they interpreted it. They believed He was making Himself equal with God.

Go to John 10:30-31, here Jesus said, “I and My Father are one.” The Jehovah’s Witnesses will tell you, “Well that means one in spirit.” Look, you do not stone people for being one in spirit and attitude! The next verse says:

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have a shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me. The Jews answered and said, For a good work we stone thee not. But for

blasphemy and because that thou being a man, makest Thyself
God. (John 10:31-33)

They understood this a little differently. Jesus answered, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said ye are gods?’” What passage is it referring to? Psalm 82. What is it talking about? It is referring gods with a small “g.” It is talking about the judges of Israel. When they made a verdict, it was treated as God’s authority. He said, “Now you call them gods who, to whom the word of God came.”
The Scripture cannot be broken.

Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified or set apart and
sent into the world, thou blasphemers? Because I said I am the
Son of God?” (John 10:36)

You do not need to know the background of the passage—although you should—but please notice that the term, “I am the Son of God,” was definitely considered to be blaspheming. In saying it, He was making Himself equal with God. In their day they took it as that, and so it is hypocritical for us nineteen-hundred years later to say that we know what that term meant.

John 19:7 adds to this just a little. It says that the Jews answered Him, “We have a law, and by our law He ought to die.” They were saying this to Pilate because Christ made Himself the Son of God. If this meant that He was a little born one, or a child, nobody would have panicked, but that is not the case here. So you see, the term *huios* meant something much more significant. He is the unique Son, the One, the heir of all things.

In Psalm 2, which is a messianic psalm, the Father speaks and says to the Messiah, “Ask of Me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession.” So when He called Himself a *huios* of God, He was also saying that He was the *Hamasheach* (the Messiah), the one who is to receive all of the inheritance of God.

He is also called the Lord. Now once again, people who do not believe in the deity of Jesus say, “Well, the word ‘Lord’ in Greek is *kurios*, and that is used today for an earthly lord who manages an estate.” Now that is not really the question. The question to ask is, “Does it also refer to God as Lord?” They have to admit that it does, because *kurios* is used of God. Here is something interesting. Ask them, “Are there any other words that are used to translate the word, *Yahweh* in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament)?” When you translate it into the Greek, what word is used without exception? It is always *kurios*. This makes this a little more difficult because Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as *kurios* and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

I asked the Jehovah’s Witness leader (which I told you about earlier), “If *kurios* refers to *Yahweh* are you a Christian?” He said, “No, I couldn’t be.” It was interesting to me because this was someone who is not a Christian, though he believed himself to be one, and he recognized that if *kurios* refers to *Yahweh* that he, in fact, was not saved. He did not believe that the term refers to *Yahweh*—that Jesus is not *Yahweh*. This may be a little confusing, but that is what I sometimes do. I like to ask a question that exposes a problem.

“If the word *kurios* in Romans 10:9 (where it says you have to confess that Jesus is Lord) refers to *Yahweh*, are you, in fact, a Christian?” The answer has to be, “No,” because you have to confess with your mouth that Jesus is *Yahweh*, if that is what it means. Now, of course, they do

not believe that it means that. They think that *kurios* means just an earthly lord, but we recognize His earthly leadership too.

Now go to Isaiah 45. Let me show you something. We are taking time on this because it is the heart of the problem in gospel witnessing and preaching today. We are not clarifying who Jesus is. Remember that I said that there are two issues concerning this: 1) He is the *Hamasheach* (the Messiah), and 2) He is God. These two issues are not clear in most evangelistic campaigns. Much of the time they are not even brought out. I listen for them. The pastors will say, “Believe in Jesus,” but they do not designate which Jesus. “Accept Jesus into your heart,” I can accept Buddha in my heart too. What are you talking about? “Jesus will forgive your sins.” Well, if He is not God then He cannot. That is why this is so fundamental to the whole issue of the gospel.

Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am
God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself the word is
gone out of My mouth in righteousness and shall not return.
(Isaiah 45:22-23)

Who is speaking in this text? Do not say that it is the Father because it does not say that here. Who is speaking here? God? “I am God.” “That unto Me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear.” Does this text ring a bell? A slight bell? A little ding dong in your mind? Look at Philippians 2:9-11. The whole passage is great, but verses 9-11 pertain to this more directly.

God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above
every name, that at the name of Jesus [you cannot miss that]

every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess.

(Philippians 2:9-11)

It quotes Isaiah 45:23 and so it helps us understand who is speaking in Isaiah. While we are here in Philippians, look at Philippians 2:5-11. In theology this passage is called the *kenosis* of Christ. The Greek word *kenao*, from which we get *kenosis*, means “to empty.” The most controversial passage in the entire Bible about the person of Christ, as to whether He is God or man or both, is this one. Now let me show you why.

Philippians 2:5 speaks of having a humble attitude toward people as you can see from the opening four verses. Then he says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” He is still talking about humility, which is having the right attitude towards other people. Then the text expounds on Christ Jesus with “Who,” speaking of Jesus in 2:6. “Being in the form of God.” Now the Jehovah’s Witness likes to work you over on that. The word “form” is *morphe* in Greek. We get our medical term “morphology” from this word, *morphe*. What is *morphe*? *Morphe* is the exact nature of something—it is whatever its DNA is. It is in the word “metamorphosis.” As we look into the word, the Holy Spirit is transforming us into the image of Christ from glory (his) to glory (ours), even as by the Holy Spirit. That means our true DNA is originally depraved as we are born lost sinners, but when we come to Christ, we have a new nature. We are born of God, and one day it will be seen on the outward, which is the process of metamorphosis. *Morphe* is the exact nature. So, contrary to the Jehovah’s Witnesses argument, it is actually a stronger statement. If you want to put it in the vernacular of today, Jesus has the DNA of God. In a way, that is a little bit borderline, but you understand because it helps us to identify it.

“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” The Jehovah’s Witnesses try to water this down, but what it actually says is, “to rob” or “seize” or “grasp something violently.” What he is saying is that His humility was so evident that He did not parade the fact that He was God in front of people. Instead of being what the Jehovah’s Witnesses say, it is actually a testimony to His deity. It is saying that even though He is in the *morphe* of God (i.e., the exact essence of God), He never paraded it. He did not walk around and say, “Watch out how you talk to Me. I am God and I can kill you.” We know that was not the character of Christ—He never talked like that and that is the point of this verse.

Now Philippians 2:7 says that He “made Himself of no reputation.” Some of you have translations that read, “He emptied Himself.” That is the word *kenosis*, or *kenao*. He emptied Himself. Here is the argument: When Jesus became a man, did He cease from being God? In what sense was He still God? “He made Himself of no reputation.” “He emptied Himself,” and even “took upon Him the form of a servant.” This is a beautiful thing, because the word “form” is *morphe* again. Did you know that our Lord, in His true nature, is a servant? The Bible says that Jesus came to serve and not to be served. That is what He is all about. That is why when we have the character of our Lord in us, we will be servants.

He was made in the likeness of men. Now it changes. It no longer uses the word *morphe*. “Being found in fashion as a man.” So, what do we learn here? First, was He a man? Yes. “God manifested in the flesh.”

Let me do something else with you. Have you ever heard this, or seen or heard the spellings about the term the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Sometimes that reveals a lot of theology, and here is what I mean. I know that you do not know what I’m talking about.

He's more man than God. Liberal theology would say that He is Godlike, but He is not God. Now another way to write it would be God-MAN. What is wrong with that? It is still just a level below what it should be, is it not? That is where a lot of your cults come in, being just a little bit low, yet some of them are worse than that.

What is the correct spelling? First of all, as a man, is He the only man? No. Is He the man of all men? What do you think? I think that is a yes. There never has been a man like Jesus. See, we all identify with the humanity of Christ, which we will be studying a little bit later. He sympathized with us and He knows our situations. Many times when we relate to the Lord, we are relating as human beings to someone who is a man. But He is not just any old man. So we had better not put small letter "m." I suggest you write it like this: GOD-Man. He is the GOD-Man. God in human flesh, and He is not small letter "m," because He is the man of all men. Is everybody following that? It's kind of a game with words or letters, but it might help us to identify with what it is saying.

Now, what does it mean when it says that He emptied Himself? There are two verbs here that connect this text together. Philippians 2:7 says, "He emptied," while 2:8 says, "He humbled Himself." This is the self-emptying of Christ. First of all, He did it to Himself. That suggests a rather remarkable ability, does it not? I do not know how to tell you this without an illustration, and so here is an example of someone who empties himself. In ancient times, when the Romans would go to battle, a Centurion was in charge over a hundred men. The Centurions and other officers would also take off their insignia that indicated that they were an officer, because the barbaric tribes would always try to kill the officers first so that the men would scatter faster. In order to prevent that, the centurions would take off the insignia that was on their shoulder pieces

(which designates them as an officer). They would identify with all their men and they would enter the battle and fight with their men. Some of the greatest fighters in the history of the ancient world were centurions. These were men who just were over a hundred other guys, but they identified with them and fought with them. You would not have been able to tell who was an officer when they went into battle. They never stood out in front. They stood in a long line with the men as they marched.

When you describe the man taking off his insignia, you would use the word *kenao*. What I am trying to say is very important. When a centurion takes off the emblem, does he cease being a centurion? No, he remains a centurion and his men would know that he is one. What he is doing is laying aside the visible manifestation of all that he really is for the benefit of what he has to accomplish. Do you understand that Christ laid aside the exercise of His divine attributes? He was not constantly parading them in front of people. Now He did often show them that He was God. In the Garden, He takes one look and they fall over like dominoes. He did miracles in their presence. Yet most of the time, He was a normal man because “He humbled Himself.”

The God who created all men and the universe, who fills the universe with His presence, put His presence into a physical body and became one of us. Why? To show us what He is like and to communicate with us, then die on a cross for our sins because we could not save ourselves.

That is why 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, “God was in the Messiah reconciling the world unto Himself.” Let us look at a couple more here.

He is called the Lord of Glory. Go back to Psalm 24. I hope you are all getting better acquainted with Jesus. Psalm 24:7-10. This is a great messianic psalm.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; [This is often used at Roshashana, which emphasizes the King and His kingdom. The trumpets blowing and majestic emphasis.] Lift up your head O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? Yahweh, The LORD strong and mighty, Yahweh the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? Yahweh Of armies, he is the King of glory.

Now look at 1 Corinthians 2:8. There is an amazing connection between these two passages, because they both speak about the wisdom of God, which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. The connection with the Old Testament there is just too powerful to miss. Also, in the “Lord of Glory” passage of Psalm 24, we have the word *Yahweh*.

Christ is also called the Holy One.

Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am Yahweh thy God, which teacheth thee to prophet, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go. (Isaiah 48:17)

Here the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, says “I am *Yahweh* thy God.” Now in Acts 3:14, Peter says, “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just and desired a murderer to be granted unto

you.” When Jews speak about the Holy One, blessed be His name, you are speaking of *Yahweh*, the Lord. Yet in fact, He is described by Peter as being our Lord Jesus. I would say that that is pretty strong evidence that Christ is God.

I do not want to address the-First-and-Last one yet. It is going to take a little more time than we have, but I want to end with this thought. For years now I have been concerned that people in good churches (Bible-teaching churches) really do not know the Lord. You know, we use that so simply do we not? “Do you know the Lord?” Well, if you ask me if I know George Washington, I know some things about him. I have read about him, but I have never met him. I do not really know him, and we use those statements too. I am not sure that I really know that person. We might mean that we are an acquaintance, and because of our prolific use of, “Do you know the Lord?” we see it as a type of catch word among Christians. It has bothered me because I think there are a lot of people in our churches that do not know the Lord of the Bible. They do not know Him.

There was a man who was a leader, an elder, in a church (I will not refer to which one). He heard me speak on the deity of Jesus Christ. Afterward he came up and started arguing with me. He said, “You are stretching this. He’s not God. He’s the Son of God.” He said, “When you have people receive the Lord, they receive the Son of God. You don’t say that He’s God.”

I said, “Well, I do, and if you don’t...” I asked him, “Do you believe that Jesus is God in human flesh?”

He said, “No, He’s the Son of God.”

I said, “Sir, you have no business being an elder in this church because you’re not saved.” Well, he blew, and I was a young pastor at the time and so I thought, “Oh boy.” It is one of those things that when you get older you learn, but you know I have not changed. He was wrong because the Bible teaches he was wrong. By the way, I do not believe that he was saved. I believe the events that happened in his life prove that he was not saved.

It is interesting to me how many people really know the Lord. Does it burden you? Does it bother you? People ask Jesus to come into their heart. “Jesus? You mean that guy who lives down in Tijuana? Yesus? What one are you talking about?” “You know, Jesus of the Bible.” Invariably they are talking about the one that walked the hills of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem.

I had this example just a week ago. I was trying to briefly share with a guy about what Jesus is like now. I was getting frustrated talking to him and was not getting anywhere. This is what I said to him, “Are you aware of the fact that there are flames of fire that shoot out from His eyes right now?”

He just looked at me like I am nuts or something. I said, “Yeah, it says so over here in Revelation 1. There are actually flames of fire that shoot out from His eyes.”

“Jesus?”

I said, “Yeah. Jesus. There’s some other very interesting things said about Him too. Very different than what you’ve been describing. I just wondered if you knew Him. When it says His hair is white like wool and white as snow. He didn’t say He was white. It says His hair was white. In other words, He turned white. What’s that a sign of?”

“Age.”

“It’s the Ancient of Days, which is the Lord Jehovah in the Old Testament.”

“So what are you talking to me about? That’s Jesus?”

I said, “Yeah.”

“Well, what about the pictures in the bookstores?”

“Well, those are drawings, attempts to visualize Him, but that's not what He is now since He rose from the dead. He now looks totally different than what He looked like when He was walking on the earth.”

This guy would not buy it. He just said, “That’s not the Jesus I believe in, and he walked away.”

I wonder how many people really know who Jesus is. You must confess with your mouth that He is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead in order to be saved. It is not just asking Jesus to come into your heart. Let us pray.

Father, we are aware that our modern generation has stripped words of its meaning. We have watered down the gospel. We try to make it easy for a narcissistic culture to receive, yet we have done them a terrible disfavor. Lord, I pray that you would teach us to be clear about who Jesus is, so that when we

introduce people to Him they may know what the Bible really says. Help us to know, Lord, that we might think this through for ourselves. Have we in fact, confessed Him as our Lord and our God as Thomas did long ago? Work in our hearts, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

I pray, Lord, that we might rejoice knowing that this is the one to whom we come in prayer. He is the one who ever lives interceding for us. He is the one who provided our redemption, and will take us all the way home. We want to thank and praise You for our blessed Lord—Your gift to us, Father, which demonstrates Your wonderful love. Help us, Lord, to learn well. We pray in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.

We are continuing to study the deity of Christ. Turn to Isaiah 44. We have already looked at His names that prove He is God. He is called “God,” and the “Son of God.” If I were to ask you what that means, you, of course, will know. It refers to position not origin. The fact of the matter is that the Greek word for “born one” is never used of Him in the New Testament. He is the heir. He is called the “Lord”—*kurios* is what translates the Hebrew word, *Yahweh*. He is called the “Lord of Glory.” He is called the “Holy One.” One hundred and eight times the Bible says that He is the “Holy One of Israel.”

Now Isaiah 44 presents a very critical issue as it relates to the deity of Christ. He is called the First and the Last. Look at Isaiah 44:6. I pointed out to you before that the word *Yahweh* is used twice in this verse. The Redeemer is called “*Yahweh* of Hosts.” It says, “Thus saith *Yahweh*, the King of Israel and His redeemer, *Yahweh* of Hosts, [Lord *Sabbaoth*].” The word *Sabbaoth* means hosts or armies. “I am the first and I am the last and beside Me there is no God.” Now I know the statement, “I am the first and the last and beside Me is no God,” is a statement of deity. Over in

Isaiah 48:12 it says, “Harken unto Me O Jacob and Israel, my called, I am He. I am the first. I also am the last.” There it is again. “My hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth.” This one is clearly the creator.

Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. (Isaiah 48:13-16)

He is the sent one, and yet in this text He describes Himself as the First and the Last and the creator. “Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God” (Isaiah 48:17). This is a fantastic text. In fact, the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah are critical to the issue of who the Messiah is and His deity.

Now take what you learned just now in Isaiah and turn to Revelation 1. Watch how the New Testament takes these quotations and applies them directly to Jesus. We read of the vision of the resurrected Christ in Revelation:

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:17-18)

You see, there is no doubt about it. He is our Lord Jesus Christ, and He makes a clear statement: “I am the first and the last.”

In Revelation 2:8 it says, “And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write these things saith the first and the last. Which was dead and is alive.” You cannot deny this one. At the end of Revelation, in the last chapter it says:

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.
(Revelation 22:12-13)

Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. Now if it is the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet, and Christ is called the Word (the revelation from God), then everything there is to be said that He is the first word and the last word. He is the first letter and the last letter. He is the whole alphabet! He is all there is that God has ever said. You see, the statement is really dealing with the finality of God’s revelation. Jesus is God in human flesh. A final revelation that is complete and sufficient. All the fullness of God dwelt in Him in bodily form. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Now at that

point, if you put a period, you do not have a strong Old Testament connection, although they are certainly powerful statements. But the next one is, “The first and the last.” There it is again, directly out of Isaiah 44 and 48.

Now notice Revelation 22:16, which says, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” The point of using this verse is to confirm that the person talking is, in fact, Jesus.

Now we have already mentioned that He is called the “Lord of Hosts” in Isaiah 44:6. The word there is *Yahweh*. The Redeemer is called the “Lord of Hosts.” It is not *Adonai* (an earthly lord). It is *Yahweh*, the very name of our God.

Now we said there were several arguments to prove the deity of Christ. His names are just one of them. We also have the matter of His attributes and abilities. Technically speaking, divine attributes are not possessed by man. The reason why I point this out is that you will get some books in the Christian bookstore that will talk about the attributes of God. Then it will say, “Some of the attributes are love, righteousness, faithfulness, etc.” Though we are not what God is, we do manifest some of the same characteristics. When you speak strictly of the attributes of God it is not love, it is not mercy; it is not righteousness. Man has a limited capability to manifest these qualities, but the attributes of God are what man is not capable of possessing in any degree.

Certain Christian preachers on television have announced to audiences that they are God, saying, “I am God. I am God.” That is blasphemy! It is a miracle that God did not strike them all dead. Thank God for His patience and long-suffering. We are not God. We never will be God. Ever! God is God, and no one else will be God because there is only one God.

It is very important, therefore, to look at these attributes, so that you can ask yourself the question, “Do any of these apply to Jesus Christ?” We have listed seven of them for you:

- **He is eternal** (Isaiah 9:6; 1 John 5:11)
- **He is unchangeable** (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:8-12; 13:8)
- **He is omnipresent** (Matthew 18:20; 28:20; Colossians 2:3)
- **He is omnipotent** (Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 1:8; 22:12-13)
- **He is perfect** (Colossians 1:19; 2:9-10)
- **He is incomprehensible** (Isaiah 9:6; 55:8-9; Matthew 11:27; Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 3:8, 19)

Christ is eternal and man is not. Isaiah 9:6 says, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Now, a lot of people—like the Jesus Only group who believe that Jesus and the Father are one and the same—will use this verse to say, “Isaiah 9:6 calls Him the Father.” No. It calls Him the Father of the Ages. What it means is that He is the source controlling all of time. It is dealing with His providential control, but it is not saying that He is the Father. This text describes Him as being eternal. In 1 John 5:11, which is a wonderful passage to memorize for assurance, it says in verse 11, “This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.” Eternal life is the possession of Jesus Christ. He is eternal. There are more that we could give you, because we are just hitting the highlights.

Now a second attribute of God, which is unlike man, is that He is unchangeable. Malachi 3:6 says, “I am *Yahweh*, I change not.” Now from man’s perspective, it might look like He changes.

For instance, at the time of the Flood it says that the Lord repented that He made man when He saw all the wickedness of man. Yet to truly understand that we need to know that that was written from a human standpoint. He has not changed. One of His principles is to judge sin. So you see that He has not changed. The Lord changed His mind, we think, because man sinned. No, He knew that man would sin, and so the change of mind simply deals with the change of the course of action which God will take. Up until that time, He is patient. At that time, He is no longer patient but brings a judgment—and righteously so. His character simply does not change.

It is interesting in that passage, that if the Bible did not say that about God and if, in fact, He did not judge the world, then we could argue that He does change. Yet His character is always consistent with Himself. I would like you to turn to Hebrews 1 so that you get this into your mind and heart. He is unchangeable. In some theological books that you might read from time to time, this is usually called “immutability,” meaning unchangeable.

But unto the Son He saith, thy throne O God is forever and ever.
A scepter of righteousness is a scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast
loved righteousness and hated iniquity therefore, God, even thy
God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy
fellows. And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the
foundation of the earth. And the heavens are the works of thine
hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest unchangeable. They
all shall wax old as doth a garment. As a vesture shalt thou fold
them up and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and
thy years shall not fail. (Hebrews 1:8-12)

What is interesting is if you go over to Hebrews 13. The book of Hebrews is one of the best books to read on the person and work of Jesus Christ—especially from a Jewish point of view. You cannot miss the connection, because here at the last chapter, he deals with the immutability of the Lord which he mentioned in the first chapter. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday and today and forever.” He is the unchangeable Christ!

Now some of the next three attributes are what people fight over in the Christian world. This relates to the time that our Lord became a man. There are a lot of good men who are discussing these things, but the root question here is, “When Jesus became a man, what aspects of His divine attributes did He not possess?” I want to answer this very firmly and clearly for you so that you know what I believe. It does not make me right, but I do believe it is the historic view of Christianity. That is, He never stopped being God. Never! All during His earthly ministry when He willingly humbled Himself and became a man and dwelt among us, He was still God in human flesh. All the fullness of God dwelt in Him.

Watch very carefully the tricky wording of some Bible teachers today that indicate that the fullness of God dwelling in Him did not occur until the resurrection. Some in the Word of Faith Movement actually believe that Jesus became a sinner, descended into hell, was tortured, punished, then became born again, and then became the fullness of God in human flesh. They would say that we also can do the same through the new birth. That is pure heresy! It is an abomination in the sight of God, and I do not care how extensive their television ministries are. I am talking about Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin and Fred Price. Many of the things that they say will look and sound good, but their view of Christ’s deity is pure heresy!

Now Christ never stopped being God—ever—throughout the time He was here on earth. When I pointed out Philippians 2:5-11 to you (the key passage on what we call the *kenosis*), we saw the emptying of Christ. What we believe He did is that He laid aside the exercise of His divine attributes. It does not mean that He permanently did this, because on certain occasions He clearly revealed it. It would have only taken one look in the Garden of Gethsemane and the entire priestly soldiers would have fallen over backwards like dominoes. He could have done whatever He wanted to. He said to the fig tree, “be withered!” “Whoosh,” that is the end of that one! He could do whatever He wanted to. There was a storm in the Sea of Galilee, which the Bible says He rebuked. It uses the same word for rebuking a demon. Immediately the sea was calmed. It did not just gradually go down, but went “Whoosh!” The disciples, who were expert fishermen, knew that wind did not just casually subside like that. When they saw it, they fell at His feet and said, “Truly You are the Son of God.” Then they worshipped Him as the Bible declares.

So, Christ did not stop being God, yet everybody questions this. For instance, let us look at Christ’s possession of the attribute of being omnipresent. How is Jesus omnipresent when He had a physical body located in the land of Israel (never really traveling more than 200 miles from His home)? Now class, I do not want to make you a weirdo in your brain today, but I do want you to understand that at the same time that Jesus was walking the hills of Judea and Galilee, He was also filling the universe with His presence. This is where we have a total inability to understand from the human perspective.

Matthew 18:15-20 deals with the issue of what to do when a brother has trespassed against you. This is not when you think he has trespassed against you, but when there is a known trespass. Do not come up to some brother and say, “I just have bad vibes about you and we just need to get it straightened.” I would like to suggest that you keep your vibes to yourself and lay them at the feet

of the Lord. Do not trouble other Christians about it. Now if somebody has literally smacked you in the face, this is called an offense. You are now supposed to go to your brother and say, “Hey man, you shouldn’t have hit me in the face.” We assume that he had no reason or cause to hit you, but that he just did it. If he does not listen to you, bring two or three others. If he does not listen to them, then tell it to the church—presumably as Acts did through its leadership. “But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Verse 20 says, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” That is all you need for a church: two or three people. If you are Jewish, it almost makes us laugh because we have to have at least ten guys. What do they mean, two or three? Well, He is talking in the passage about the two or three witnesses. According to the law in Deuteronomy, in order for a word that you say to be established, you need two or three witnesses to confirm it. What He is saying is that when two or three are gathered together in Jesus’ name to witness what that brother says, He is there in the midst of it. In other words, the authority of Christ is there.

Now in Matthew 28:2, after His resurrection, Christ makes a statement pertaining to this after giving us what is called the “Great Commission” to go and teach all nations and baptize them. He says, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” Do you believe the Lord Jesus is with you right now? Do you believe He is in this room?

Colossians 3:11 says, “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.” In other words, “Christ is everything that you would possibly need in Christianity and is in every person.” This verse clearly teaches the omnipresence of Christ.

We speak about Jesus coming into your heart, but according to John 14, not only does Jesus come, but the Holy Spirit and the Father come as well. Jesus said, “We will all abide in you.” “We will make our abode in you.” That is kind of interesting and confusing to children. Why do you not ask the Father to come into your heart? It would almost confuse them. See, when you honor the Son, you honor the Father. Do not make any mistake about it, there is only one God. You cannot separate them in the sense of their presence because they are omnipresent.

It is interesting that Christ is on the outside of the door of the church of Laodicea in the book of Revelation. He is not in the church. He is on the outside knocking and saying, “If any man...” (He uses the singular). Apparently the church gets so bad in the end times that Jesus has been pushed outside and His invitation is to anyone in there. Is that not interesting? “If anyone will open the door I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me.” So at the end times the point of the individual’s relationship to the Lord is very critical because the church is apparently so rotten that He wants to spew it out of His mouth and He is actually knocking on the outside of the door.

Sometimes we use this with little kids and say, “You must open the door of your heart to Jesus.” That is true. I would say sometimes to little kids, “The doorknob is on the inside and Jesus isn’t going to force His way into your life. He is not going to knock down the door. You have to open the door and let Him come in.” Is that a valid application? Of course it is. An individual receiving Jesus is on the outside of the church in the end time and it is very valid to say that. Then I ask them, “So where is Jesus now?” This is where they get confused. In most of the children’s books, you are supposed to ask the child, “Where is Jesus now?” Well, you want them to say, “He’s in my heart.” You can say, “But He’s also in heaven”—yet that would confuse a child, but it is the truth.

We know from the time of His ascension, that He is at the right hand of the throne of God and He is not coming back during this age. He is in heaven. What is He doing up there? He is continually interceding for us in front of the Father. Why do we need to have intercession? Why do we need to have somebody defending us? There is a prosecuting attorney in the throne room of heaven and that is the devil. You say, “I thought he got kicked out back there between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.” No, somebody made that up. At the book of Job he was still up there accusing brothers and sisters, and according to Revelation 12, he will not be officially kicked out of heaven until the tribulation period. There will be a titanic battle between Michael the archangel accompanied by the good angels of God versus Satan and his angels. The good angels will win, and Satan will be cast to the earth, where he will try to unleash his fury in the last three and a half years of tribulation. What has he been doing up there all this time? When you wear a t-shirt that says, “The devil made me do it,” you are giving yourself too much credit. He is not paying you a personal visit because he does not need to. He can send one of his greasy little demons to trouble you. He does not need to pay you a personal visit, besides he is not omnipresent. The devil is not ubiquitous, but is an angel. He has the ability to travel with great speed, faster than any of us, but his primary mission is to accuse the brethren day and night before God. Thank the Lord that Revelation 12 tells us that we have overcome him by the blood of the lamb. Our Lord is ever living as our high priest to intercede. He is our defense attorney, which is the meaning of the word “advocate.” He is called our advocate in 1 John:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.

And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and

not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

(1 John 2:1-2)

It is a wonderful truth that He is omnipresent. He is right now at the right hand of the throne of God, in the physical body in which He was resurrected. Yet He is also in my heart as well as the Father and Spirit. God now dwells in me, but not all of Him.

You say, “Well when do you have the fullness of God, meaning all that He is?” Only when you have all the believers together. Paul wrote in Ephesians that the church is the fullness of Him who fills all and in all. Now all the fullness of God dwelt in His one body alone, and so all that God is was in Jesus. Yet all that God is, is not in you, but in the total body of Christ. Here all the aspects of God’s character is reflected. Is everybody following me? So you might know something about God that you reflect in your life. Perhaps His mercy has been good to you, and another person might know something about His faithfulness. As we share in the body of Christ, we all learn, we all grow and we edify one another in love.

He is also omniscient. I cannot tell you how many guys—good Bible teachers—say, “Well, when He was on earth, He didn’t know everything.” Why do they say this? They get this from one passage and one passage alone. “No man knows the day nor the hour, neither the angels of heaven or the Son of Man.” This refers to the day of His coming. They say, “See, He doesn’t know the day.”

Now let me ask you a question. Is there anything that God says that He knows, which He chooses not to know? Can anybody think of one? Our sins! Praise the Lord. Does He know what we have done? Of course, but He chooses not to remember our sins any more. Praise the Lord. Can the Lord then choose not to remember the day, while He was on earth talking to us, to identify with His disciples? Could He choose to do that? Of course He could.

Is there any evidence that He was omniscient while He was on earth? Look at John 2, and remember that in Colossians 2:3 it says, “In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” It sure sounds like He knows everything to me. Let me ask you a question. Did Jesus grow in wisdom and knowledge? Yes, He did, as the Bible states. He grew in wisdom and knowledge and in favor with God and man. Then He did not know everything, did He? You see, we are right back at the mystery problem of the deity and humanity of Christ.

Is there any evidence that Jesus was omniscient while He was on earth? Yes. John 2:23-25:

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast [day], many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all [men], And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

It would be a little uncomfortable if you were hanging somebody who knew everything you were thinking? In Mark 2:6, Jesus heals this paralytic man, “And certain of the scribes were reasoning in their hearts, ‘Why does this man, thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God only?’” Verse 8 says, “Immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, ‘Why reason ye these things in your hearts?’” That must have come as a little shock to them. He knew what they were thinking.

Not only is He omniscient, but He is also omnipotent. That means that there is nothing that He cannot do. Now people ask, “Wait a minute. Can He make a rock that He can’t move?” The

answer is no. He does not do dumb things. Let me add a little statement to give you what I really believe is the biblical doctrine on the omniscience, omnipotence and omniscience—particularly the omnipotence primarily. “God can do anything consistent with His nature.” See, God is not going to violate who He is in order to please our fanciful ideas. He is omnipotent.

Philippians 3 speaks about His power to give us a resurrected body like His. He writes:

Our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. (Philippians 3:20)

Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that He cannot do that. To them, only the Father is capable of that. Eventually Christ surrenders all things to the Father who is the only one who can do that. Yet here is a clear verse that says Christ will do that and can do that. Our Lord is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

In Revelation 1:8 it says, “I am Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end, sayeth the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty—the Omnipotent One.” This one is difficult to miss. There is not anything that Christ cannot do. In fact in Revelation 22, He says the same thing, “I am Alpha and Omega.” Clearly this is Jesus according to verse 16 as we have already seen before.

One of the things that designate God as being God and not man is that He is perfect. He is totally complete and sufficient in and of Himself, therefore needing nothing. Colossians 1:19 states, “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Now in the Greek text the word “Father” is not there. That is why it is italicized in most Bibles. The subject of the sentence is “all the fullness.” Let us now read it as it is in the Greek. “All the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him.” Whatever God is, there is nothing missing.

Look at Colossians 2:9-10 which says, “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are filled up in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.” This is very interesting that when you have Jesus you have all you would ever need. You do not need anything else—ever. Our sufficiency is of the Lord. Christ is all and in all. You do not need anything else. What about holy laughter? No, you do not need it. Stained glass windows? No, you do not need it at all. What about Pastors? Did you know that the church grows all over the world without pastors? God will raise them up just like He wants, out of anybody, anywhere. Do we need Bibles? No. We went many years without Bibles. The church still grew. In fact, we did not even have a printing press until AD 1450. There must be something else that we need. Do we need Robes? No. Christ is all you need. That is why we can do church anywhere. Let us do church. Amen.

Now there is one other term that you will not often find that I believe fully fits the whole argument is that He is incomprehensible. He is past finding out. He is greater than our knowledge can ever discern. In Isaiah 9:6 it says, “His name shall be called Wonderful.” The Hebrew word means that his name is incomprehensible (i.e., too difficult to understand). I think it is important for us to understand this nature of God, because we are going to be learning about Him throughout all eternity and we will never find out all that there is to know about Him. Some

people see heaven as finally knowing everything you need to know about God. No. You are just starting.

My thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

He gives us a comparison here. Would you say that the galaxies out there are quite a distance from earth? You know we talk about sending a spaceship out and traveling at unbelievable speeds, but we cannot even travel at 186,000 miles per second (*e.g.*, the speed of light). It takes four years to get to the nearest star in our galaxy—not counting many galaxies. Would you say the heavens are higher than the earth? Of course, it is almost mind-boggling to even fathom how man could ever approach it. Then understand that God is using that to say, “Oh by the way, My thoughts and My ways are in the same manner far distant from where you are.”

In church history there are two doctrines about God that sort of fight each other from time to time and you need a balance. There is what we call the transcendence of God, meaning how great He is. The other is the eminence of God, meaning how He has identified himself with His creation. He is transcendent—far greater than anyone can possibly fathom. Yet He is also eminent—small enough to live within my heart. Those two things battle.

Sometimes you and I, in wanting to pray to God, want to know that He is as close as our breath and He is our friend. He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and is also our compassionate and merciful high priest, who comforts us when we are going through difficult times. We pray as

though He is right there in the room. We talk to Him as though He is just like another person, which He is. Now we have to be careful here of the eminence of God. If we keep focusing on it, how He is like us, it brings rise to a danger of misunderstanding who He really is. He is also the transcendent God—Greater than anything you could ever imagine!

People tell me that I really have to believe something in order for it to happen. The Word of Faith Movement is a great example of this, “You should claim it; just say it; just believe it. It’s up to you, brother. You can have it or not!” It is both nonsense and an offense to the transcendence of God. It is not my great faith in God that does anything, but it is merely faith in a great God. The greatness of God is what I need to understand in order to truly have confidence and dependence upon Him and not myself. That is very important. He is the incomprehensible God. Romans 11 says that His ways are past finding out. His judgments are unsearchable. It is really incredible when you think about Him as the incomprehensible Christ! Amen.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

We are now going to consider the abilities that prove that He was God. Of course, we are going to start with Creation. He created all things. John 1:3 says, “All things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made.” “He was in the world,” verse 10 says, and the world was made by Him.

Colossians 1:16 says, “He created all things whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, things in heaven, things in earth, things under the earth. Everything was created by Him and for Him.” As the Creator, He is God.

Now the Holy Spirit also was involved in Creation. We are not discussing the Holy Spirit here, but I wanted to point out that He had a role in Creation as well. “The Spirit of God moved [or hovered like a dove] over the waters.” More importantly, Job 26:16 says, “By His Spirit He hath garnished [beautified] the heavens.” You might say that the Holy Spirit was the architect. He created all things.

Number two is a very interesting doctrine. Do you believe that everything that happens in your life is being controlled by Jesus Christ? I sometimes laugh at how often we fight over whether or not He is controlling the issue of us becoming Christians. How easily we can say, “Oh yeah, He controls all things.” Does that mean He controls time? Did God know the day you were conceived and born? Does He know the day you are going to die? Is He controlling it?

Romans 11:36 says, “All things are from Him and through Him and shall be unto Him.”

Colossians 1:17 says that He is controlling even the physical laws of the universe. Why do the worlds not collide? Yet when a meteor does hit, it is because God wanted it to. Wow. What a doctrine! That would be popular in the average university campus, would it not? Colossians 1:17 say, “He is before all things and by Him all things consist.” They are being held together by Christ.

Hebrews 1:2-3 says that He is upholding all things by the word of His power. All the laws of the universe are controlled and sustained by Jesus Christ. Now the old theologians called this “providence.” The word “providence” means the control of our circumstances and events in life.

Now let us suppose that today you took a little trip down the mountain and you had a car wreck. Now here is a problem. Did God send angels down (or remove them), knowing that the way you drive you would easily have a wreck? Or did God send specific agents into your life to give you an accident at a given moment of life because He knew that would accomplish something relating to His plan? Did He do that? Someone in the audience mentioned that He allowed it, and here comes another gigantic problem in Christianity about the will of God.

If God just allows things but does not do anything to intervene, is it because He is too busy and has others over in China that He is working on? This is a very difficult problem. Now you see I can always discuss this warmly, freely, and controversially in class, but until something negative happens in my life it is another story. It is okay to talk about this if it happened to you. But if it happens to me, I begin to say, “Well, hopefully the Lord *only* allowed it.” I cannot imagine Him letting something like that occur.

I will give you an illustration. A young couple had a baby which lasted for two months and then died. I performed the funeral and everybody was asking me the same question, “Why?”

Sometimes it is not advisable, or appropriate, to just come out with it. You do not respond in that situation saying, “Well, there are thirty-six reasons why that occurred.” That is not exactly very comforting. Sometimes we say what we want to say to minister at that moment, but in our minds there is a question. We know that the truth will set us free. Now I can say, “Well He is sparing your baby from a terrible life,” because if we only have hope in this life, we are of all men most

miserable. According to what God said to David whose baby died (the baby will not come back to him, but he will apparently go to the baby) the baby is in heaven—with the Lord. I guess that that sort of helps.

If you have ever lost a child, then think about this. There are events that happen in life, to which the response is “Why?” Here is somebody that looks like they have such tremendous opportunities for the Lord. Their whole life has been designed and shaped by God to be greatly used and then bang! They were killed. Why did this happen?

First of all, we have all got a problem here because it is almost like our purpose is to find meaning in life and to avoid heaven as long as possible. Do you see what I mean? Is it really true that you have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better? Now I was not sure of that the day I got married. A good friend of mine who is the head of a large missionary organization in Europe was my best man. We are at the wedding, standing in front of the minister who is going over this, then he leans over to me and says, “Just think, the Rapture could occur right now.” My long good friend—God bless him, that whacko. You see, there are a lot of things in life for which you cannot come up with quick and easy answers.

Paul said, “To remain in the flesh is more needful for you.” Sometimes that may be true. I think about that more and more. I do not have any grandparents and I never met them. My parents are all gone. My wife’s parents are all gone too. You know a few years ago I woke up to the fact that I am it. I am the patriarch of this clan and I did not even want the job. You know what I mean? I do not want the responsibility. I want to play some more and not have to do this. But it happens. Grandkids come along the way, and I love grandkids. My standard answer is this, “If I knew they were this good I would have had them before I had kids.” I love grandkids. You have to think

about that. There is something that hits you the first time you see your grandchild. The first one you get. It is the question, “Am I old?” Then they get older and they are like people. They are real people—not babies anymore. You think, “Well how old am I?” It just gets really weird. Then you begin to ask the question, “Why?” Sometimes I think that my family needs me to stay around. But the truth is, they really do not need me to stay around. You see, that is how you begin to feel. Then you think, “I want to go home and be with the Lord.” Well, maybe not yet. I just want to finish my class. It would be embarrassing to have to leave here in the middle of it. Then I think, “Wait a minute, we are going to glory. They will instantly know all the material and won’t need the exam,” which probably sounds like a relief to some of you.

Now, getting back to my point, “Does God really control all things?” Are we saying that the Lord Jesus Christ is controlling all things? How does He do that? There are millions of people all around the world. How does He do that? I often look at traffic and wonder, “Man, how does He maneuver that all?” Can you see why a lot of people—well meaning Christians—have God not active in the affairs of human life? Yet He is over all things and in control. He is achieving whatever He has predicted will take place according to the Bible. In the particulars, we get to the place where we feel, “Well maybe He just leaves a lot of it up to us.”

Then we develop strange kinds of doctrines. Have you ever heard this? “The Lord helps those who help themselves.” You see, we do not know how to deal with it. We do not know how to cope with it. I would suggest that you find out what is included in the “all things” that are being worked after the counsel of His will. I made a list. I am not going to print it out and give it to you because I would rather have you look it up. It is a long list, which goes on for two pages concerning all the things that I found out that God was controlling. I discovered that it involved everything. I do not understand how He does it, but the important thing is that he does.

I can honestly say that whatever happens in my life is directly being caused and worked by my blessed Lord, for His glory and my good. This happens, even though I do not see it and I have come to believe that. Have there been a lot of hurtful and disappointing things in your life? There sure has in mine. Are there things in your life that you do not understand and have never been straightened out? There sure are in mine. God knows why He is doing it. Is the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord controlling everything in your life?

You see, otherwise you get into a dilemma where you cannot even obey God, because the Bible says in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. If you do not watch out, you are going to be unable to thank God because it happened to be category bad, or you thought that maybe God only allowed it and was not involved in it, because it was bad (at least in your eyes).

When a fire comes, like the ones we have been having here in Southern California, do you think that anybody wants to read the Bible, which says that fire, earthquake, stormy winds, and hurricanes are fulfilling His word. Wow. Remember the Laguna fire? I love that story because I was in the Book of Revelation at the time. The night when the fire was the biggest, I had my Bible study at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa. You know there are windows there and everybody in the audience sat and watched flames way up in the air because it was that close. It looked like Armageddon and made a terrific background to my message. We had people wanting to get right with the Lord right and left. That was such a neat time. During the course of that time, many of you read the following story which was in the newspaper. It dealt with a community called Turtle Rock in the Irvine area (a very wealthy and affluent area). As the flames were rushing towards Turtle Rock, they actually thought that the area was going to go. That night we had a prayer and

we actually asked God, on the basis of people who lived in Turtle Rock, that He would supernaturally turn that fire around and stop it. Now, I am not saying it was because we possessed such great faith, but God did stop that that night exactly when we prayed about it. Now, how do I deal with that? I just want to “Praise the Lord and you can touch me afterwards,” but that is wrong. Do you see how easy it is for us to get confused? Now did God do something special and coincide it all with people’s praying? Yes, I believe that, but there were probably a lot of people in that community too that were praying that He might have answered.

Now in the course of that, do you remember seeing the one community that was destroyed and the one house in the middle was left standing? I talked to those people and they are Christians. They made a mistake in their joy of thanking the Lord because, in the same block, there were Christians who lost their homes. They talked about how God spared them as though they were somehow special. God rains on the just as well as the unjust, and it is called common grace. This also deals with common tragedies like hurricanes and fires. Many “innocent people” (which is a doubtful statement right there) were hurt or killed in the tragedy. We have to be careful. Did God help that family? Yes, for some reason, but there were others He let their homes burn—maybe for another reason. The American mind is that God did that in order to bless them with a bigger house. Possibly He wanted you to come down to a little apartment that you could afford. That would not be the blessing of God. Would it? Because is not everything supposed to be bigger and better when God is in it? No. That is false doctrine.

Do you understand that the reason that we are struggling about praising God, thanking Him, and really worshipping Him, is because we do not see all things from His hand. That is why people, when they have the good things praise God. “You cannot believe God blessed me with a job. Man, I tell you it was fantastic. It was a raise over what I had before.” The next minute have you

ever heard a guy say, “Oh I thank God I lost my job. He deliberately kicked me out. I’m on the streets now and I can’t eat and oh what a blessing from the hand of the Lord.” Do you understand what I am saying?

Be careful when you say that He is upholding all things by the word of His power. By Him all things consist and hold together. We know that He works all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. It is really a tough issue though.

In dealing with the abilities of Christ, it is amazing even among my Jewish friends because they make the following statement, “He is not the only one that could cure people and heal people.” I just want you to know that anybody that was healed in one fashion or another was ultimately healed by God if a true healing took place. Let me tell you how extensive my view is concerning this. I believe that all healing, whenever it occurs, comes from God. If there is anything in any medicine that heals you of any sickness, the chemical properties of that came from the soil which God Himself created. Is everybody understanding? When your body, through its natural processes, recovers (no matter the means of its recovery), God ultimately is the One who created that process to occur. If a doctor in his wise skill was able to operate on you and get out cancerous material and it turned out to be benign and all of that, I just want you to know that whatever “healing” occurred, God is the author of it, because He even gave him the skill and the ability to see it and to do it (including the equipment, technology, medicine, etc.). Therefore God is ultimately the author of all healing.

In the light of this, we know that some people (whether Christian or not) have been involved in healing. We know, for instance, that the devil is capable of signs, wonders and miracles as well. Now we do not want to say that everything is of the devil because we do not really know. I do not

believe that God teaches that one of divine methods of healing is for me to blow on you. The reason that I do not believe that is God never said to blow on someone to be healed. Now there are people who do believe that, as you know. I do not believe that it is the will of God for me to take my jacket and throw it over your sore and shout, “Be healed!” I do not believe any of that. I do not even think that I have to have a meeting on television in order to do it. Also, I do not believe that I have to have the faith in order for it to occur. Also, I do not believe that you as a sick person have to have that faith in order for it to occur either. I have got reasons for all of this. If you want to know what I believe, I have a little booklet on everything the Bible says about healing. It is really an eye-opener. By the way, Paul, who apparently had the ability to heal people, could not heal some of his closest friends. He left Trophimus sick at Miletus and Apaphroditus almost died on him—so much for his healing power.

Now the reason that I am telling you all this is to see that the ability of Jesus Christ is totally different from any human agency that has ever been involved in healing. Look at Matthew 4:23-24 for one example. Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. There never was anything that He was not able to heal.

He also proves He is God by having power over the sea, as I mentioned that earlier. He calmed the sea instantaneously by just a spoken word. In John 11, the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, He said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Believest thou this?” Now that is putting the pressure on. Then he went to the tomb where everybody was weeping. He says, “Roll away the stone.” The response, “He stinks.” Now I just skipped some things but that is basically what they said. Here is the one who can heal anybody, any time, because he has all power. He is standing there, “Roll away the

stone.” Their answer was, “But he smells.” Do you understand that is a classic illustration to what human response normally is to the power of Christ. Poor Lazarus! Of course he is dead, but he might be thinking, “Hey, down here man.” “We’d love to hear you, buddy, but you stink.” Now when Christ said, “Lazarus, come forth,” do you realize how important it was to call his name? Otherwise everybody would come forth. This is the eternal God talking here.

Now the funniest thing to me about that story is that I have been to Lazarus’s tomb. If you have been there in Bethany, you know that it is a tomb that you have to walk down and old ancient staircase all the way down. It is a little crawl space down in there, and you can hardly maneuver even if your body is not wrapped up. So, here this wrapped up zombie-looking guy is coming out of that hole and walking. He had to walk all the way up those stairs and come out of the door. Then he is standing there going, “Humpf, unmpf.” Jesus says, “Loose him and let him go!”

By the way, I have this little streak in me that has kind of a carnal touch to it from time to time. I had a guy on one of my Holy Land tours who kind of was the picture of Jesus. He had olive skin with long beautiful black hair. He was a tall, good-looking guy. I arranged ahead of time for him to go in a car and we wrapped him in grave clothes all over his body and had him get down into Lazarus’ tomb. We brought the tour group up there, and we are all standing at the entrance. I am preaching on it and I said, “How many of you believe that he could come forth on the sheer spoken word of Jesus?” I still remember this. “Lazarus come forth!” And he comes walking out of the tomb. Two elderly ladies standing in front of the tomb both fainted right on the spot. My tour guide suggested I might not use this practice again lest we have somebody die of a heart attack. I also did it at the tomb of Christ at the resurrection. That was great too.

Well, He does conquer death. One final thing. Is there anything more wonderful than His claims to forgive sin, answer prayer and give eternal life? How could He not be God? In Mark 2 the scribes were correct when they said, “Who can forgive sins but God only?” They were right even though they questioned whether Jesus could. Jesus knowing what they thought in their hearts, confronted them on it and turned to the man and says, “Your sins are forgiven.”

Jesus said, “I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.” “If you ask anything in My name I will do it.” This is God, and that was all said while He was still a man on earth in the days of His flesh. It is incredible is it not? Praise the Lord. Let us pray.

Lord, in all of that pursuit we are limited by our finite minds—our inability to reason as You do. We cannot see as You see. We not only ask Lord, that You would impart to us a heart to believe You, but that we would be content and rest when we do not understand, because we know you are God. We thank You that You are doing all things well, and that there is nothing too hard for You. You will always do right, even though to us it may not seem that way. You have asked us not to lean on our own understanding, but in all our ways to acknowledge You and You would direct our paths. Teach us to do that, Lord. We thank You, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

If I were to ask you on the test, “What is the method by which He becomes incarnate?” your answer is, “The virgin birth.” The virgin birth: I do not know of a subject that gets people so messed up as this. In 1952, there was an attempt by the Revised Standard Version to clear things up, but instead it caused more controversy than you can shake a stick at. In the Revised Standard Version, Old Testament edition that came out, they translated Isaiah 7:14 (which should say, “Therefore a virgin shall conceive,”) as “a young woman shall conceive.” Now the word does mean “a young woman.” A virgin is a young woman, but not all young women are virgins. The question is, “How do you answer this problem?”

First of all, I believe that the virgin birth is rooted in the prophecies that are in the Old Testament. It was not a last minute thing of Jesus and the Father saying, “You know, we really ought to have the virgin birth, because that would really seal this thing up pretty good.” No. It was a prophecy which He was going to fulfill. A prophecy that began in Genesis 3:13, “The seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.” It was a prophecy that was in the time of Ahaz, in the prophet Isaiah (7:14), and that is the key passage. In Isaiah 9, it is also a prophecy that says, “Behold, a child is born and a son is given.” Make sure you know this, if you want to jot it down in the margin, the child is referring to His birth, and the son is referring to His adoption. The virgin birth is what created the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6-7. How could one person be born a true son and be adopted as a son at the same time? The virgin birth provided the answer to Isaiah 9:6 as well.

The Hebrew word in Isaiah 7:14 is *almah*. The key that we believe (those of us who know the Bible to be Old Testament as well as New Testament) is that in Greek, the word *parthenos* does not have the variety of interpretation that *almah* does. *Parthenos* always means “virgin.” In Athens, when you look at the Acropolis, or if you ever see a picture of it, or see it in a movie, you will see the beautiful Parthenon, one of the most amazing buildings in the world, and one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It is called the Parthenon because it was a temple of prostitution using virgins. It means “virgin,” and it cannot mean anything else. Now the word *parthenos* is in Matthew 1:23, which quotes Isaiah 7:14. It is also in the Greek Old Testament translating Isaiah 7:14. It is the word *Parthenos*, it is not *a* virgin, it is *the* virgin. “Behold, the virgin is bearing a son, and she calls His name Emmanuel.” The word Emmanuel (“God with us”) brings us back to the question of deity. Jewish scholars list 456 references to the messiah, but Isaiah 7:14 is not one of them.

The problem that we have in the New Testament deals with the genealogies of Jesus Christ. I do not know how to approach this exactly except just to get in on it, and then wade through it. The greatest theological problem among the rabbis of Jesus’ day dealt with how in the world we could have a messiah from the line of David, since the line was cursed, that is, the kingly royal line through Solomon was cursed. It was cursed with the fact that a man/child would not be born of that line that would sit on the throne. Let us take a look at this prophecy. Beginning at Jeremiah 22:

As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim
king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I
pluck thee thence; And I will give thee into the hand of them that
seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest,

even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah. (Jeremiah 22:24-30)

Jewish rabbis were debating, “How in the world can we ever have the messiah? The messiah has to be the son of David, but the curse is on the line, and none of the descendants could ever prosper and sit on the throne of David. What in the world are we going to do?” They would argue this every day, because, to them, there was no hope.

Listen carefully and do not go out here and mess it up or accuse me of something that I did not say. What happened was that they developed a concept called the “second messiah.” He is not the son of David but the son of Ephraim. He was the son of Joseph. Interestingly, in the Messiah’s discussions in rabbinical writings, the rabbis argued that this messiah was going to die. The son of Ephraim, the son of Joseph was going to die. Through his death, he will atone for the problem, and then we could have the true son of David, ruling and reigning. This concept of the two messiahs developed in the Judaism, and you will still find it in a lot of Jewish literature, though,

much of the modern rabbis discard it and do not even think about it. It was an attempt of the rabbis to solve some of the passages that look like Daniel 9, “the prince will be cut off,” or like Isaiah 53 “he was wounded,” or as in Zechariah, “one of his wounds in the hands of the messiah in his house that he received.” There are several passages that they tried to solve.

Now, the second messiah will not work and so we still have our problem. How could a messiah, even as the son of David, ever sit on that throne in the light of this curse. Look at Psalm 132:11, which says, “The Lord has sworn in truth to David, he will not turn from him. I will sit upon your throne the fruit of your body.” What an obvious contradiction. We are going to sit on the throne the fruit of David’s body, but the line is cursed. So what is the answer? The answer is the virgin birth. The problem is solved in the genealogies. In Matthew 1 we have the genealogy of Joseph, who is in the line of Solomon. In Luke 3, we have (by Luke the physician) the genealogy of Mary, who turns out is also in the line of David, though not through the cursed line of Solomon, but through David’s son Nathan, whom he named after the prophet who had confronted him. Mary is in that line. So was a child born of that line that it covers a fruit of a body through the descendants? Yes, and it also solves Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a child is born.” That is Mary and her line. “Unto us a son is given,” that is adoption. When Joseph married Mary after the birth of Jesus, he adopts Jesus. Jesus becomes the legal heir to the throne of Solomon. That is why the virgin birth is God’s answer to the greatest theological problem to Israel. Everybody should be happy now. It is time to sing a Christmas carol, “Silent night... round yon virgin,” I used to think a virgin was fat when I sang that as I a kid.

“A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Emmanuel.” Now we have several proclamations about the virgin birth. We have, for instance, the fact that He is sinless. He is called, in Luke 1:35, “that holy thing.” 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “He hath made him to be sin for

us who knew no sin.” Did Jesus Christ ever sin? No. Could He have sinned? Many Christians say, “Yes.” The answer is no. It is what we call the impeccability of Christ. I have a whole doctoral dissertation from a hundred years ago, when men actually thought about these issues more than we do today, called “The Impeccability of Christ,” and all it does is discuss it. It is a phenomenal volume. Once you read it, your interest in salvation is far greater. Both your joy and your praising the Lord becomes greater. In Hebrews 4:15 it says, “He is without sin.” “He was tempted in all points like as we are yet without [literally ‘apart from’] sin.” Now, the sinlessness of Christ is a crucial issue to our salvation. If Christ had sinned, then He would have to pay for His own sin.

I am going to get into some very heavy things and I just want you to be patient because it might confuse you a little. It usually has confused people when I have taught it before. I am not intending to confuse, but what I am intending is to deal with some questions which are sometimes ignored by people. One day a cult just comes along and uses stuff against you, and you are not ready because you do not know this. What we are trying to do is to give you as much knowledge as we possibly can in the shortest amount of time so that you will have some figurative facts in dealing with a very serious issue.

If I asked you, “Do you have to believe in the virgin birth in order to be a true born-again child of God?” The answer is yes, even though when you received Christ you may not have understood it. The believing heart reading about it knows it had to be. Therefore, anybody who denies the virgin birth as a biological miracle, actively denies it upon hearing of the facts, is in fact, a non-believer.

I was preaching out in a conference in Iowa two years ago and a pastor kept jumping all over me every service about something. Do you ever get the idea that sometimes when people come up to

you and talk to you about something that they are not really asking you a question, but that they have a bad spirit, and are hostile. They want to make an issue, and they want to be heard or whatever. This was that kind of a guy. He just kept doing it, and I tried to be patient and talk to him, but he just kept doing it. He was there every meeting (morning, afternoon, and night).

I had spoken a little message which I had on the virgin birth. He came up to me right afterwards and said, “You’ve got to be kidding. You mean to tell me you actually believe that a biological miracle like the virgin birth occurred? That is a total scientific impossibility, and that is why a lot of people are turned off from the church. It is because of people like you.”

I should not have done it (I was carnal), but I said, “How many people come to hear you speak every Sunday?”

“I want you to know we have over a hundred every week.”

“That’s wonderful.” I wanted him to ask me the same question.

He said, “How many come to hear you speak?”

I said, “Well, anywhere from seven to ten thousand.”

He said, “Well, let me rephrase what I just said.”

It is as if attendance is somehow an issue. It means nothing! Whether there is one person or ten thousand people, it means nothing. The issue is, is it true or not?

He said, “I cannot believe that any thinking person would believe this.”

I said, “Well, I take it that you believe I don’t have all my marbles or I’m, you know, mentally deficient in some way? Or deranged? Or you are just convinced of an error and you just don’t have the courage and guts to admit that it could have happened? Well, let me tell you about what kind of courage and guts I have. On the basis of what you have just said, you are not a Christian.”

He flew into a rage, but the story has a happy ending. I led him to Christ before the week was over, he is now an independent Bible-teaching pastor who believes in the virgin birth. God can open your eyes.

Without the virgin birth, we cannot have a messiah. It is impossible. Show them the curse, and show them the passage. We have birth and adoption. Tell me who was born and adopted at the same time. This whole sinlessness of Christ was protected by the virgin birth. Why would His sinlessness be protected by the virgin birth? He did not have a sin nature. Where does a sin nature come from? The male. The girls are pure. Do you girls not like this discussion? The real problem is the man. Oh class, do I have interesting things for you today. Now let us keep talking. Wait a minute, “You’re telling me that because He did not have a human father, therefore He was sinless?” There are many Christians who say this, and it is wrong, that the virgin birth makes Christ sinless because He did not have a human father. This is wrong. He has always been sinless. Do you understand the danger here? No, He is the sinless son of God, regardless of whether He has been born of a virgin or not. So how is it protected? In Psalm 51:5 David said, “In sin did my mother conceive me.” Is sin present, therefore, at conception? Yes. That is what the Bible says.

So then He was sinless and He was protected. If, in fact, He had a male father with male sperm, He would have, in fact, inherited a sin nature.

I hope you are still thinking. Is the human body sinful? What verse would you use to prove the human body is sinful? Romans 7? I do not believe it says that at all. Is the physical body sinful? Is your hand sinful? Romans 6 says you can use the instruments of your body for sin, but it does not call it sin. You can use it for sinful purposes. You see it was also wrong theology in church history to believe the body was sinful. That is what caused the monks of the monasteries to use the scourging of themselves to drive sin out. That is what caused Origen (one of the greatest minds in the church history) to castrate himself to eliminate sexual sin only to discover that he still had sinful thoughts afterwards. That will cause you a thought or two. No, the body is not sinful. Where does sin come from? The heart of man. When does that get in there? Was sin present at conception? That is what it says. "In sin did my mother conceive me." It either means that he is an illegitimate kid, or he had sin present the moment he was conceived. A lot of us choose, "Who knows?"

We got a problem here. First of all, it is a great argument against abortion. Why? Because the body is not sinful. That is exactly right; sin resides in the soul (your mind, emotion and will). You are created in the image of God after His likeness. That means the soul is present at conception. That means the baby growing in the womb is a real person. Therefore at any stage you are killing a real person when you abort the baby. Does it matter whether it is infanticide, meaning after it is born, or whether it is one month before, or whether it is in the first month after it is conceived. It is still a murder, because the soul is where sin resides. Not in the body. Therefore you have a real person; if sin is there at conception, you have to have a real person from the beginning. Stay with me, class. Remember that when God created man's body out of the dust of the ground and

breathed into man's nostrils, physical nostrils, breathes in the breath of lives (plural) and then becomes a living soul, or creature. God says all souls are mine. It is only the soul that sins, that shall die. If that is true, then did God place the soul, breathe it into the conception of the egg and the sperm, breathe it in there at that moment, or is it transferred through the genetic code of the sperm?

I know this is heavy-duty, but listen to me, one of the greatest controversies of church history, "How was the soul transferred?" Does it come through the genetic code? Now some of us think that, because I will give you the question tomorrow but I need to finish the thoughts, when you look at somebody, do you not say, "You're acting just like your father," or "You really have a lot of the traits of your mother." They either mean that they physically look like them in some way or that somehow the soul is transferred. What is the next step that that leads to in terms of false teaching? Reincarnation. You see how difficult this is? You really have to think it through. Is the soul placed there at conception? If it is, therefore God is responsible for putting a sinful soul into the body. Now we have a problem.

According to the Bible, it is in Adam that all die. According to the Bible it says, "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin so death passed on all men for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Even from Adam to Moses death reigned even over those who did not commit the likeness of Adam's transgression, but they still showed they were sinners and they still died. I lean (when I say "leaned" that means I do not want to be dogmatic) towards the fact that the soul of man is transmitted through the male sperm. You say which genetic property is it? I do not know, but I lean that way. It is a mystery that we do not understand is passed all the way down the line from Adam to the present day. That is what I lean to, and therefore, Jesus, not having male sperm is a part of this conception and birth, even though we already assume this the virgin

birth did not make Him sinless, yet He was protected by the virgin birth so that no accusation could be given in the future of His having a sin nature or even participating in the sin of man. The impeccability of Christ is at stake. He is the sinless Son of God, and I will show you before we are through in our study that that is critical to believing that you are saved. You could not be saved apart from it.

Now, it was produced by the Holy Spirit. The Bible has that language, that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. That actually happened, however, small the fetus can be at the moment of conception (some of you have been through this biologically, so just stay with me). I happened to have participated in what they call an “urban transplant.” A good friend of mine discussed the theological implications of it, he was the one who was involved with it when it first started, which they still do now. They have the ability to take human sperm and to match it with an egg outside of the womb, to produce a person and then place it back into the woman. I have seen that operation and so my mind is thinking of that also while we are talking.

I do not know, believe me, how this actually occurs, but I do know from what the Bible actually says, Jesus did not go through the process of sperm hitting the egg. This means that Jesus was able to take whatever moment after egg-sperm become life, and was able, without sperm, to place a physical body in the womb of Mary—at the moment of conception. If you understand that, you are more brilliant than I am. I do not understand it, and I have looked at it a dozen ways. I know it is absolutely essential to believe in order to know who He is and to know my own salvation. All the way through it I say, “This is a total, biological miracle, in more ways than one.”

We say that He is special, the Son of God, the Son of the Highest. Under the conditions of what we have in this biological miracle, we cannot have a son. I have verified this with medical

authorities, there is no exception to this whatsoever. There is especially no exception in the animal world, where these tests have been performed. The Bible says that He is the Son of God, not the daughter of God. According to genetic law, the virgin conception of Mary should have produced a daughter, not a son. The human male determines the sex of the offspring. His entrance into the unfertilized egg of Mary caused it to develop without the expected duplication of the female X chromosomes. You say, “Wow!” That is why I printed it out. Someday you will need this. When an unfertilized egg duplicates its chromosomes in response to artificial stimulation, which I have seen, the result is always female. There are no exceptions. There is no indication that God fertilized the egg of Mary through the work of either the Father or the Spirit. She conceived without human or divine fertilization when God the son entered not only her womb but also the egg in her womb under the superintending ministry of the Holy Spirit. Then, enter Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses and many other cults that would say, “Well, then how could He be the only begotten son of God?”

First of all, the words “only begotten” are used five times by John, all in reference to Jesus with no descriptive passages around there describing what it means. It is used in one other passage. Turn to Hebrews 11, because here is where we find out the answer. He is called the only begotten son of God five times by John. Once someone else is called an only begotten son.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten [son], Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.
(Hebrews 11:17-19)

In other words, he was a type of Jesus Christ. Now, did Abraham have other children? Yes, he had Ishmael and six sons by Keturah because his wife after Sarah died. He had a lot of other children, but in what sense was Isaac his only begotten, male sperm, only begotten son? In that he is unique. The one through whom the messiah would come. You see, every time it says Jesus is the only begotten Son of God it is like the New International Version, which tries to answer that, they call Him “the one and only.” He was the unique and special son of God. There is no other son like Him. He is a son to the Father, which no one else is.

Angels are called sons of God by creation in the Old Testament. Believers are called sons of God by adoption in the New Testament. Yet Jesus Christ is the Son of God by His eternal relationship to the Father.

[Amended June 25, 2004 and this section has been intentionally left blank.]

They are all eternal, for instance, the Father loves the Son from eternity past (before the foundation of the world says John 17). It does not say that the Father loves number two. It does not say God loves Himself, but it says the Father loves the Son. So is God the Father eternally God the Father? Yes. Is God the Son eternally God the Son? Yes. Is God the Holy Spirit eternally the Holy Spirit? Yes. That is why that issue is so mind-boggling when you keep walking through it.

[Amended June 25, 2004 and this section has been intentionally left blank.]

It is very important to say what God says. In order to fully understand what God said, you have to deal with that egg-sperm problem. You really do. You cannot walk away from it, because it is fundamental. It is a part of the problem that we have today, even understanding it ourselves. Understand that I was born in sin, that I had a sin nature from conception, and that I do not become a sinner from sinning, but I sin because I am a sinner. There is a lot of difference between that. That deals with the way we present the gospel (i.e., why we need a savior), and also in Romans 5, you will never understand it unless you see that (in Christ versus in Adam). Romans 5 discusses the federal headship of Christ and Adam, representing the old man and the new man. “By one disobedience and transgression, many are made sinners. But by the obedience of one, many are made righteous.” The way that is described

here is beautiful. When all said in done, I have to back up and say, “I’m trying the best I can with the facts I know in the Bible, but honestly, it’s a miracle, and I don’t understand it.”

I do not believe that Jesus Christ ever had to be spiritually born. He was God. What it talks about when He was conceived in the Holy Spirit is His physical body, never His divine person. Never. The Greeks actually have a word that also refers to some one into the womb, as well as when he is just born. A word called *brethos*. Remember in 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul said to Timothy, “From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.” The Greek word for child is *brethos*, which means that from the time he was in the womb he knew the Holy Scriptures. Until recent times Christians used to laugh at that and say, “Well, what it means is a hyperbole, it’s an exaggerated statement. His parents taught him that, you know, whenever he was able to understand.” Now, scientifically we know that children are hearing it? We now know when a child is born, without any other input; it can detect who its mother is. Without even seeing her because it has heard it in the womb. Here is another thing we know by experimentation. We can play music during the pregnancy, then after the child is born, play another style of music, and find the child break out crying every time. We turn to the music it heard during pregnancy, and the child is at perfect peace. We now know that the baby in the womb is receiving information constantly (e.g., signals, hearing things, and feeling things). We know that more than ever.

I love what Sandra O’Conner said in a case, it went the wrong way, but she said this to the attorney that was arguing the case, “There is no way that we can reverse Wade vs. Roe decision until you men decide when human life begins.” You know, I wish some one had paid attention to that woman. She was absolutely right. The whole Wade vs. Roe ruling would be overturned if we would come out and deal with the issue that human life begins at conception. To give the proof of the fetus being an actual person, with its response factors, its feeling of pain, all of it, it could

easily be done and it has never been done to this day, because there is a massive bureaucracy who runs abortion to cover up a sinful lifestyle. That is what we are really up against. We are not up against medical facts. The judge is right. If in the Supreme Court we ever had the evidence that human life began at conception, they would have to, automatically, by law, overturn the Wade vs. Roe decision. Nobody wants to handle it, because we have already accepted the sinful lifestyle that is been created by it.

Father, thank You for your Word. Bless all the classes today and this week, Lord, that we may really grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ. Thank you. In His precious name. Amen.

Lord, we praise and thank You for all those throughout history who wrote of Your praises and Your work, who glorified our Savior and brought praise to His name by encouraging Your people to praise in song as the Bible teaches. Teach us, Lord, to sing Your praises. You have told us and commanded us to sing unto You, and I pray that we will truly learn to praise You in song. You said, “Let every thing that has breath praise the Lord.” As we come again to study the beauty and majesty of our Savior and His miraculous power, may we fall in love with Him again. We pray this in Jesus’ wonderful name. Amen.

We are going to start in John 2. There is one statement in the Gospel of John that we want you to know, and that is found in John 21:25, which says, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”

Many people have said, “Well he is just using hyperbole. It probably wasn’t really true.” Yet, I wonder if he was underestimating it. Let me tell you what I mean by that. Remember in the Gospels that it says several times that there was a great multitude that came with diseases and infirmities and all kinds of things. It says that He healed every one of them. You see, if the story was written of every single person He healed, because we know that what is already recorded here and is just a sample. Imagine how many books we would have to have to tell the story and the details of everything that happened. John 21:25 is an interesting verse for sure.

We are going to look at seven things. It is hard to put all the miracles together. Now not all miracles are healing, but all healings are miracles. Does everybody get that? All healings are miracles that Jesus did. We could say, in general, that the kinds of healings people propose as being healings are not always miracles. Some might be a charlatan trying to seduce us or deceive us, but everything that Jesus did in the way of healing was a miracle. Yet not all His miracles were healings. There were other things that He did. If you are interested in healing, I have a little booklet called, *Healing: What the Bible Says About It*. In it, I took every example of healing and summarized it in a little booklet. At the end of the booklet it gives you a biblical doctrine of healing, expressing all that the Bible actually says about it. I think it is very helpful to read it, because, sometimes when I see people talking about healing they do not give me the facts. I do not want to get confused. In other words, they are already pretty set in their ways about what they think. If I asked you, “How many people are named in the Bible who actually healed somebody?” The answer is amazing. People think that there are just a score of them. Actually, there are only a few that performed healing, and it is important to understand what actually occurred.

Were there any people with the gift of healing who could not heal somebody? Yes. That was true also. Therefore it is very important to get an understanding of that, but we want to broaden our subject to the subject of miracles, which includes healing and a lot more. We tried to take all the miracles and put them into seven categories demonstrating the power of the Lord.

The signs, the miracles that Jesus did, were given to us, according to John 20:30-31, in order to prove that He is the Messiah and believing in that results in life through His name. Let me put it to you another way. The unpardonable sin is the sin of attributing the miracles that Jesus did to Satan rather than to God, and thus not believing that the miracles proved He was the Messiah. In

one sense it would be difficult to commit the unpardonable sin, but the unpardonable sin will become unpardonable if you continue to reject Him as the Messiah and do not believe that the miracles prove it. If a person dies, having continued in their rejection, then obviously that state is unpardonable. Though this is not the unpardonable sin, because the unpardonable sin would have to be committed while watching Jesus do these miracles. It would be difficult to have that sin without that. But that is another subject for another time.

Under the miracles of Jesus, it would be easier to see how it relates to Christ being the Messiah by putting them in seven categories. First, He had power over creation. I am not simply talking about the fact of His involvement at Creation, which is stated in John 1:3—that “All things were made by Him. And without Him was not anything made that was made”—but I am also talking about how His power over creation was demonstrated while He was here on earth with miracles that He did. There is one prominent verse in John 2.

Here we learn about His power over creation. I would like you to follow along in your Bible as we read it. Since this is the beginning of miracles, you ought to know the answer if I ask you on a test, “What is the beginning of miracles that Jesus did?” Now when you are traveling in Israel there is a little town named Cana, but it is not the biblical town. When you are standing on the hills, especially at Sulphorus which is near Cana and Nazareth and you are looking off into the valley where Cana is, you can see a little tell. Ancient Cana is there, but it has never been excavated. There are a lot of hills like that all over Israel. They are tells, or mounds that need to be excavated. It just takes time—many, many years. Now this miracle happened at the little town of Cana of Galilee. To our knowledge, not much has happened in Cana. Looking at the tell, it was a very small town, but do not despise the day of small things. Some mighty things often happen in small towns. Here is one example:

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. (John 2:1-4)

First of all, do not think that Jesus is attacking His mother here. It is a term of respect, but what He is saying is a Greek idiom for, “We are on different wave lengths right now.” Jesus had something that He was going to do, and it was not simply to provide wine. The hour for Him to do what He was going to ultimately do in this world has not yet come—it was not time yet. As a matter of fact, this is going to be the first time that I am even going to do a miracle.

His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (John 1:5)

Let us give a word to Mary here and say, “Amen.” Thank God for her example. The Bible says that when she saw things in the life of our Lord, she kept all these things in her heart. In fact, she treasured them. She thought about them a lot. She meditated on them. She is the one to whom the angels said, “That thing that is going to be born of you is going to be caused by the power of the highest and He will be called the Son of God.” Mary kept all these things, and rejoiced in God her savior. Here is an example, she quickly responds and says, “Whatever He says, do it.” She was probably thinking, “He is going to do something. I know it. But what it is, that’s up to Him.”

And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. (John 1:6)

There is a lot of disagreement here, but we think that is basically about 20 gallons in each waterpot. That is what you call a rather large waterpot, and they were designed for purification, cleansing and washing.

Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare [it]. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: [but] thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. (John 2:7-11)

The disciples believed, even though we are told later that they did not really believe in Him until after the resurrection—at least they believed this was a miracle. This was indeed a miracle, and there was no doubt about it. The disciples knew it. It was the reason why they would continue to follow Him. It was the beginning of His miracles and it was indeed spectacular.

Now most people have a problem with this miracle. Here is what they say, “Oh Jesus turned water into wine. I can have a little snort once in a while.” That is all they see in this miracle. Now let me help you with this miracle. First of all, the Greek word translated “wine” can refer to the juice that is immediately squeezed out of a grape when the grapes are dropped in the wine vat. It can refer to a week’s grape juice, in which foam that does appear on the grapes that are fermenting naturally. It can appear at 30 days. It can be used of that which is 3 months or less. It can refer to the wine of Passover which is mixed with three parts water so it is completely diluted from its alcoholism. It can refer to 6 months. It can refer to 3 years which you always throw out. In other words, the Greek word gives you no help as to whether it is connected with current alcoholic processing.

The second thing that is interesting here is that the ruler of the feast identified the kind of wine that it was. He said it is “best” or “good wine.” Now at a marriage supper or any feast or occasion, what you serve first is pure grape juice. It is called best wine. To be literal, when the workers bring in the grapes from the fields and drop them on an ancient winepress, the shear pressure of those stacks of grapes causes some of them to break open and the juice drains into a pan that is under that grate. What you will still see today as you did 2000 years ago, the workers will rush in and fight over that pan. They will pull it out and they will literally drink it right on the spot—right out of that pan. That is what is known as “best wine.”

Do you understand why this is a miracle? There was no way you could have gotten enough grapes to drop on a winepress to get that much wine (grape juice) into six waterpots of twenty gallons capacity each. There is no way that they would have time to do it. There is no way that they would have had the amount of grapes to do it. It was an absolute astounding miracle of His

power over all creation. The best wine, pure unadulterated and unfermented grape juice, is what He changed this into. All this little bit about trickery with His hands, and He grabbed some bottles and poured them in there really quick. Sorry friends, that not only is misleading and deceptive, but it is insulting and it is an abomination to the glory and majesty of our Savior.

There was no doubt. The disciples knew it was a miracle. They believed in Him on the basis of what they saw: an absolute miracle.

He is not only the creator of all things—the one who created the grapes, the one who can cause this miracle to occur—but He is also the sustainer. The Bible teaches that He created all things, as Colossians 1:16 declares, but the next verse says, “By Him all things hold together (consist).”

I do not want to bore you, but speaking in thermonuclear terms for a moment, I want to make sure that you understand what this passage is saying about the power of Christ. In thermonuclear terms you have what is called “stokeon.” It is a Greek word, referring to the structure of the physical or material universe. Technically, it is the molecular structure that holds it together. The protons, neutrons, and electrons make up the molecular structure of the physical and material universe. We all know that it is being held together. We do not really understand it. We have analyzed the physical laws related to it, but how it actually stays together we are not sure. This keeps the processes of orbiting going in our solar systems as well as our universe. Once in a while we see an exception. Something breaks out of its gravitational pull and we might see an asteroid hitting the earth that causes people to panic, but generally the whole solar system is operating on mathematical principles (e.g., physics and laws).

It is interesting that in 2 Peter 3:10, the Day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. The very word that is used in nuclear circles for the molecular structure that holds things together (that in a nuclear explosion) actually is released. In thermonuclear explosions the results are incredible because things can liquefy. Are you aware of that? In a nuclear explosion, perhaps the difference in other kinds of bombs and explosions is that things liquefy. Why do they liquefy? They liquefy because something happens to the molecular structure: it is loosed from each other. It is interesting that, in 2 Peter 3:10, the Bible says that the elements (stocheon) will melt. The Greek word is *luō*, meaning “to loose.” Everything will be dissolved. In other words, one day we are going to see the collapse of the earth and its system and the heavens as we now know it. When thermonuclear science looks at that verse, they say, “Wow!” The Bible is a little more contemporary than we thought, because that is what actually occurs.

Until that happens things are held together, and according to the Bible, all things molecularly and structurally are held together by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is an incredible thought!

On the seventh day God finished His work of creation. He did not take a long nap or go to sleep. God never sleeps or slumbers, and the false doctrine of legalism that has the Sabbath Day representing ceasing all work is a wrong doctrine. There is work that is ceased, but in God’s case it was only the work of creation. His work providentially controls the universe as well as His work of miracles. What one day of the week did Jesus do most of His miracles on? The Sabbath. It was no violation for Him, but they made it a violation of the Sabbath.

Seeing the power of our Lord over Creation is not only creating it, but sustaining it. Hebrews 1:3 says, “By the word of His power He upholds or holds together all things.” This speaks of the

molecular structure. This is the reason why, when I hit something solid, I cannot get my hand to pass through it. Now if I knew the molecular structure and my hand could move fast enough, I could go straight through this and actually it would not even be affected. It is possible for our Lord to walk straight through walls or doors because He knows the molecular structure of all things. He could appear in a room and still have flesh and bones, which He did the night of the resurrection. Is everybody following? I find it a rather interesting insight that He who created all things and sustains them and hold it all together—and will one day release it and it will all blow up and liquefy—can go through it any time He wants. We do know scientifically that is a possibility if we all could move fast enough and we knew the molecular structure of things, because we are able to do that with, for instance, light. It is an interesting thing. Is not a science lecture, but it is important to see in terms of the miracles of Christ.

In John 2:23 there is an interesting remark that says, “When He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the Feast Day, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did.”

Apparently even the first Passover which He went to right after doing the miracle at Cana of Galilee, people saw miracles and they believed in Him.

Now look at John 2:24. “But Jesus did not commit.” It is the same word that is in John 2:23. Jesus did not believe in them, because He knew all men and knew what was in man.

People say, “If I could just see the miracles I would believe.” No they would not. There are a lot of people who believe that He did the miracles, but it does not mean that they believed and put their faith and trust in Him as their only Savior from sin. You say, “Well if someone would come back from the dead, then we would believe.” No. Jesus said, “If they do not believe Moses and

prophets, they will not believe even though one comes back from the dead.” It is a very interesting application here right after the first miracle of Christ.

Turn over to John 6:2, “A great multitude followed Him because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased.” Apparently there are a lot of them that were not recorded.

In John 7:3, “Many of the people believed on Him and said, ‘When Messiah comes will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done.’” The Messiah has to do miracles as Isaiah says. He has to heal the deaf and the dumb and the blind. He has to do it, or He is not the Messiah.

In John 9:16, it says, “Therefore said some of the Pharisees, ‘This man is not of God because He keepeth not the Sabbath.’ Others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles.’ And there was a division among them.” They were fighting over it, because healing a blind man is certainly something the Messiah was to do according to Isaiah 35.

In John 11:47 it says, “Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council and said, ‘What do we? For this man doeth many miracles.’” Even the religious leaders who did not believe in Him—who did not think that He was the Messiah and that He was blaspheming—also recognized that He did many miracles. How interesting this is.

In John 12:37 it says, “But though He had done so many miracles before them yet they believed not on Him.” That is quite a statement, is it not?

In Acts 2:22, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter in his message said:

Search Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.

No one ever interrupted his sermon and said, “No, we did not know He did any miracles.” Even Josephus records in a one paragraph statement in his *Works*: “Jesus, a man who doeth miracles.” There was no doubt, even among those who did not believe in Him, that he was doing miracles. They have a choice. How does He do this? There was not any doubt that He did it! The unpardonable sin is believing that He did it under the power of Satan, rather than through divine power. That was their only answer. It is interesting.

He had power over creation. Secondly, as you well know, He had power over disease. Turn to Matthew 4:23-25. This is one of those statements that causes you to wonder how many miracles He did. He had power over disease. By the way, do you think He still has power over disease? Do you?

He certainly handled the physical problems of Evander Holyfield. I hope you know that story, because it is rather interesting. I am not thrilled about the techniques and methodology of Benny Hinn, but Evander Holyfield was touched mightily by God during one of those meetings. As a matter of fact, Holyfield gave Hinn a substantial amount of money for his ministry. His life appeared to be changed and I noticed it when he knocked down Mike Tyson in how he kept giving the glory to the Lord. He kept saying that it was a miracle from God. Maybe the next time we meet, we will know it was a miracle because Tyson will beat him up. I do not know, but it is

interesting that Evander Holyfield kept giving credit to the Lord for what He had done in his own personal life.

Christ has power over disease. Last night on Larry King, Brett Butler was on the show. I hope you saw that. If you did not see it, you should know that it was remarkable. Butler had throat cancer, but you know that Larry King is trying to analyze this any way he possibly can, yet Brett is giving glory to God. “God did this, and if it comes back, the Lord’s will be done.” “But how were you able to do this? How were you able to come back? How were you able to finish the season?” “Well, it was the Lord. It was the Lord’s power.”

I am still speaking to you, and as some of you know, 23 years ago I also had cancer-of-the-throat surgery. They said I would never speak again, but they were wrong. Now you cannot shut me up. I am getting louder all the time.

Do you understand me? He is the same yesterday, today and forever. I know what the Bible teaches about healing. He does not promise that everybody who is sick is going to be healed. There are books that say, “God wants you well.” Well, ultimately I believe that, and the resurrection is the greatest healing of all. That is what you call permanent healing. Until that time we do get sick and we do die, but sometimes God, in His graciousness and for His own purposes (which are listed in the Bible—though a lot of people do not want to read them) heals people. Sometimes the purpose of God is not to heal you. Has it ever occurred to you that healing is not for the sake healing? There is another purpose. God wants to be glorified, honored, praised and His mercy be shown to you. He is not just healing you so that you can be comfortable for the rest of your life.

It occurred to me (and one day I got to laughing about this) that God wants me sick. I saw a title in a Christian bookstore which said, “God wants you well.” I started laughing about it. What we should write is, “God wants you sick.” He wants you so sick that you will die. He has planned this from the beginning of time, and He is going to give you a body that will never get sick. You see, God wants you to understand that the body you have is not worth much. He is going to make it fall apart, decay, and get crusty. He is going to give you so many hurts and pains that you cannot believe it, because He wants you to anticipate what is coming. He is preparing you for glory. He is not really thrilled with those of you who run out to the gym and are absolutely amazed at the great body which God has given you. That is an offense against our Lord. That is why He said, “Bodily exercise profits a little.” I am not against exercise and looking good, but do not sit there in the mirror and think that you are God’s gift to humanity, because the truth of the matter is that God wants you to fall apart. By the way, He will see to it. You will keep putting on makeup and getting lifts and all that, thinking that you can somehow survive and overcome, but you are not going to do it. Nobody has. Everybody still dies.

I believe that our Savior—if He at any time wants to—can absolutely heal you of any disease that you might for His own purposes and glory. Do not question what the power of God can do. He can heal!

I saw it on our trip. This may be simple to you, but it was not to the person who was healed. This gal, who so wanted to come to Israel, became seriously ill all of a sudden. The doctor told her that she better go home, and she was crying her blooming heart out. There was an infection all the way throughout her body. Her ears were ringing; she was sicker than a dog, and she does not know what to do. She was crying, and so I said, “Well, we could pray. That is one possibility. I mean, it is probably not a biggie on your list, but it is a possibility.” I kidded her about it and she

said, “You know, it’s not funny.” I said, “I don’t mean it to be funny. I just think it’s interesting that some of us think that’s the last resort. I mean, when everything else fails maybe God could do something.” But anyway, we had a word of prayer and I just simply put my hands on her and I asked God, saying, “God I don’t know if You want to do this or not. Maybe she needs to go home. I don’t know. But I do know that You can take this away from her right now.” The moment I said that, her ears popped. Thank you for jumping and demonstrating. Her ears popped completely and she turned to me, she said, “It’s gone.” Now if you think I have Benny Hinn power, then you are crazy. I simply said to her, “You’d better check with the doctor,” which shows you my great faith. I watched her the entire time and I thought that she was going to get sick and die, but she did not. She was absolutely healed that moment. Her fever went away. Her soreness went away. Everything, and not three days later, but immediately during that prayer. We all watched her the rest of the day. She was climbing all over the place and having a wonderful time—praising the Lord. I was thinking, “She’s going to drop over any time now.” You know, how your great faith is.

God can heal people, but He does it because He wants to. God wants to be glorified, and you see, it is so easy. The natural man (the carnality in all of us) could say, “Yeah just come up here and I’ll touch you. It’s amazing what flows out of these fingers.”

Listen friends, God wants to be glorified. He wants to be honored. He wants to be praised. Sometimes He heals, and sometimes he does not. I begin with the fact that God teaches me more through sickness and suffering than He does through health. Once you begin with that you are more prepared to experience healing, because you know that God is just going to be glorified in some way. He is going to do something through this that you might not be aware of, but He does have power over disease. Let me read these verses and then we will take a break:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

(Matthew 4:23-24)

Do you believe that God can heal somebody who is crazy and straighten out their mind? That is an interesting question as it relates to what people are doing. No wonder the following verse (25) says “There followed Him great multitudes of people”—everywhere He went—all the way down into Judea and beyond Jordan. Wherever Jesus went, they followed. His man has enormous power.

Look at John 4:46-54 real quick, it says:

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir,

come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

We already know that He did other miracles down in Judea, but the second one was when He was come out of Judea back into Galilee again. The whole thing is that He has power over all disease, no matter what it is, because He is the Messiah.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

Look at John chapter 5:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep [market] a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. (John 5:1-2)

The feast that this refers to is probably not Passover. It might be Shavaot—the Pentecost. It is one of three, though, because He would go up to Jerusalem. There are three feasts that every male, who is twenty years old and above have to attend: Passover, Pentecost (or Shavaot), and Tabernacles (or Sacot).

Bethesda is an English pronunciation of a Greek translation of the Hebrew tongue. Is that not interesting? The Hebrew is *beth*, which means house, and *chesed*, which is one of the most beautiful words. *Chesed* is one of the most beautiful words in the Bible. It is used of mercy over and over again. Psalm 136, where every verse says “His mercy endures forever,” it uses *chesed*. It is also translated “lovingkindness.” “Thy lovingkindness is better than life.” Remember that song, from Psalm 63. That is the word *chesed* in that passage. It is a beautiful word. And so *Beth-chesed* comes to be known as “house of mercy.”

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. (John 5:3-4)

John 5:4 has a manuscript problem. The part that says, “The angel went down” is suspect. The words “troubling of the water,” are in the text. What are the others in the text? I do not know. People argue over it, but it is not necessary. What is known is that there are therapeutic waters there, and they have been there a long time. A man has been laying there for thirty-eight years. Now some people have said that it does not say that he was born that way—that it is not a birth

defect—but the way it is organized in the text (verse 5) assumes it. The man was there and he had an infirmity. It did not come to him in time; he was born with it. We are not told what it is, but he is apparently thirty-eight years old and he still has it.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time [in that case], he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. (John 5:5-9)

We were just there to see that pool of Bethesda. It is right by the Sheep Gate, where they bring the sheep—the sacrificial lambs into the temple area to be sacrificed. I think it is interesting that the pool was called *Beth-chesed*, because in the Bible that word is said several times in the Psalms to be the possession of our Lord alone. The Lord Jehovah has *chesed* (e.g., lovingkindness, mercy etc.). How interesting it is that there at the “house of *chesed*” is one who can really show you lovingkindness.

I simply add this one because you know that there is a difference between getting a disease (a virus or bacteria) and getting sick and being healed from it.

The place was Yakima, Washington, and I remember it well. We had a radio rally there several years ago. A lady in a wheelchair, all deformed, came up to me and asked me after the meeting to pray for her that she would be healed. She said that she was born this way. I immediately explained to her that it is the will of God sometimes that these things happen and *et cetera*. She said, “I don’t want to hear this. I’ve heard that many times before.” She said, “Can the Lord heal somebody like me? Everybody says that He can heal their diseases if they get sick, but what if you are born this way? Does He not know the genetic problems that I have that created this?” You sit there and hope that nobody is watching because you feel that nothing is going to happen here. I said, “Look, if I pray for you will you go away?” No, I did not say that, but I felt like it. So I said, “Okay, I’ll pray for you.” So I prayed for her, and said, “Lord, I have to admit that I don’t believe that this is going to happen, but I know You can do it. You did it in the Bible. You can do it again. You can heal this lady.” She was thirty-five by the way—almost thirty-eight years old. “You could heal this lady if You want to. Now I don’t know what Your will is because we eventually all die anyway.” It was a prayer like that, and I said, “Amen,” and went on my way.

Two years later, I came back to the same place and right before the meeting this lady walks up to me, and says, “Do you remember me?” I said, “No, I don’t remember you at all.” She said, “I was the lady in the wheelchair.” It has not happened to me before or since, but I broke down and cried. I was not crying because she was healed, but that I immediately saw my own stupidity. She said, “What’s the matter?” I said, “I just... I’m sorry.”

You know when you are confronted with the miraculous, there are different things that happen to you. I want you to know that I never even mentioned it to the audience that night. I was really convicted of my lack of faith, and I had a hard time believing it was that woman. The deformity was gone. She was quite attractive—looked just normal, and I could not believe it.

Let me tell you something, folks. There is a lot of junk out there about healing and all that stuff, and I get so sick of it. You know if you have ever seen real healing, it makes you sick to see this stuff. There are plenty of people you pray for and nothing happens. God apparently did not want it to happen. The issue is God—it is not man. How do we get that into people's hearts? I do not know. God wanted to do a miracle in this lady's life, and maybe teach me a big lesson. I had no faith or confidence at all, and so it was not my prayer that did it. It was God who healed her. I just think that sometimes we have the problem. We want the glory. The number one problem in us is unbelief. Not really believing that God could do it. God can do anything He wants to do.

Miraculous things happen, and it is not ever time, but it happens.

I was called to the hospital of a girl who was eighteen years old and dying of spinal meningitis. The family members, who were Argentineans, had been called in. There was over thirty people in her room, and I took another pastor on our staff to do what James 5 says. They had asked for the anointing of oil. The doctors had said there was no hope—that she was dying. There were people crying all over the room. She was laying in the bed—totally lifeless. When we came into that room, the father asked me right off the bat, “Do you believe James 5 is true?” What are you going to say? Of course, it is in the Bible. I believe it is true. I mean, what are you going to do? I said, “Well I've got a little olive oil here. I'm just going to put it on her forehead and I'm going to lay hands on her and pray. That's what I'm going to do. It's the prayer of faith and it will save the sick and the Lord will raise her up. If it's the Lord's will.” He said, “Do you really believe that?” She's dying. I said, “Well I don't know. Last week I prayed for somebody and they died while I was praying.” He said, “Maybe we ought not to have you pray.” That is another interesting story, by the way. So anyway, I said, “Let's just pray.” So I laid my hands on her, and prayed and asked God if it was His will if He would not only heal her, but completely remove the spinal meningitis

instantaneously. I finished the prayer and the little girl sat up and she said, “I am healed.” She is eighteen, you know, and she has lost it. I said, “Please lay back down.” She said, “I don’t need to lay back down.” The doctor who was standing there said, “Please lay back down.” Then he said to me, “See what you do—You kind of people.” He started really ragging on me, and said, “This is a serious problem.” I said, “Well, if she’s going to die what difference does it make if she’s sitting up or laying down? Use your head, doctor.” But anyway, he was so mad. She said, “I demand that you take me down and run the tests on me. I think it’s gone.” The doctor said, “That’s totally impossible. I’m not going to succumb to this circus here.” I said, “Well doctor, if I were you I’d probably do it. This girl is going to drive you crazy until you do.” So he took her down and ran all the tests. We all waited in the room and he took her in a wheelchair. He was not trusting that she was healed, but about an hour later we were still waiting there, talking to the family and counseling them. “Maybe she died down there, I don’t know.” I was standing outside the room, and down the hall here came the doctor with this girl walking right beside him, witnessing to him. She was on fire, talking to him. She saw me. “Oh, Pastor David, Hi. I’m healed.” The doctor turned around and ran the other way. I saw him several times after that, but he would always turn around. He just said, “I give up.” He had no explanation, but there was not one trace of spinal meningitis in her body.

Sometimes these stories have bad conclusions. Sometimes something went wrong and then she died of spinal meningitis two years later, but I am happy to tell you that she was eighteen, but now she is thirty-seven with three children. They also said that she could never bear children of course, but she is married, has three children and is still a dynamite witness for the Lord. She goes out once a week to share Christ with people. She is on fire. Do not run into her because you cannot control her. She is on fire. She knew that something happened.

The other day we were down at Red Robin and she and her husband and children came in there. She comes running up, “Boy aren’t you glad you prayed for me that day?” I was thinking, “Man I didn’t believe it at all. I had no confidence.”

Do you understand that God does do miracles? Then when I see all this junk—these healing meetings and they are parading and running across the platform and throwing wheelchairs around—I just think, “What in the world?” They have to check their brains off at the door. There is something wrong here. But see, while we criticize that kind of sensationalism and all of that, on the other hand, do not ever think that God cannot heal. My Lord has the power to do it.

He also has the power over the food supplies. I love this. Look at John 6. Do you need some food? No problem. Here comes the Son of God. Now this story is very hard. I love to hear the rabbis teach about this. It is very hard to explain. This is the only miracle outside the resurrection that is in all four Gospels. Apparently, it is pretty important. The kid has five barley loaves. You do not give barley loaves to people, but to animals. It shows he is really a poor kid with a little lunch. He also has two small fish. Any fish is small in the Sea of Galilee with the exception of the catfish. They are gigantic there—the world’s largest catfish. They all are in the area where we baptize people in the Jordan River. They just float in there and scare people like crazy. Why are they so confident? Because they are an unclean fish. The Jews do not eat it, so they just keep getting bigger and bigger. The catfish in both the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River are huge. They are big, old, and ugly things. Why does somebody not get them? No one is going to get them because they are unclean. The normal little fish is called St. Peter’s fish. They put it on your plate (head and all) to eat. This kid in our text had two little ones. That is all he has along with five barley loaves. Can you imagine there being 5,000 men, not counting women and children (all

organized into groups). Jesus just kind of breaks it, and keeps breaking it. Can you imagine that?

It is unbelievable when you think about it.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did,
said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the
world. (John 6:14)

They were ready to take Him by force and make Him a king, as it says in John 6:15. It was not His time and so He went off to the mountain alone.

Where this occurred is a pretty strong traditional spot. That is, out of all the spots where they would have been, the fisherman, there is a little cove-like thing, where the ancient stone piers are and the fisherman worked off of with their nets and all. There is pretty strong evidence that that is where they were, which means that the little hill is probably where He fed the 5,000. It says that He went up into the mountain to pray. Now to go up that mountain, you have got to go across the road. Not many people do this, but there is a huge cave there. Remember He saw them rowing in the middle of the night and toiling and fighting the storm and all that. It is the only place that you could see that. We climbed up there and went up to that little cave. You just sit down there and realize, what a neat place this is: nice and quiet. Nobody comes up here. To think that the Lord was right there, and you could see right down to the water. You could easily see somebody struggling, and it was just kind of neat to sit there and realize that this could have been—I am not saying it is—the spot.

Christ demonstrated that He had power over food supplies. He could multiply the loaves. Now this is not the first time that He supplied food supernaturally.

When the children of Israel wanted food in the wilderness, and wished that they were back in Egypt, He dropped a little wafer down. There were thousands of them coming down from the sky and landing all over the ground. They said, “What is it?” which is exactly what it means in Hebrew. Manna, in Hebrew, means “What is it?” So God said, “You are going to call it that for the rest of your life now.” For forty years, every time you say, “What are you having for breakfast?” “What is it.” “What are you having for lunch?” “What is it.” “What are you having for dinner?” “What is it.” Every day, “What is it.” We throw in a little quail every once in a while, but it was basically “What is it.” Today there are people trying to tell you what it is. It is amazing to me. They call it angels’ food. They call it coriander seed. We do not know what it was, and that is why they say, “What is it?” It meant something more than just something to eat as we know the New Testament teaches. He had power over food.

He also had power over nature. We see this in His rebuking of the wind:

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled [with water], and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this!

for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. (Luke 8:22-25)

He had power over nature. He even walked on the water as is recorded in John 6, Matthew 14, and Mark. The wind and the seas obey Him. That is incredible!

He also had power over blindness:

And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, [thou] Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, [thou] Son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion [on them], and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him. (Matthew 20:29-34)

What struck me is that no matter what your physical problem is, the Lord has compassion. God does not ever ignore your pain. He is with you always, and has compassion on you. He knows that we are nothing but dust. He knows the limitations of our physical body. He knows how we can be sick and how we can hurt. He has compassion on us.

Power without compassion is a terrible thing. Compassion without power is very dissatisfying. It is weak, insufficient, and cannot do the job. It is wonderful to know that you have someone who cares, and is also able to do something about it. I love people who care, but sometimes they cannot do anything about it.

We had a doctor on our trip, who is an old friend of mine that moved to Maine. I noticed his compassion. In fact that is why I was attracted to him a long time ago. He helped me in some of my sicknesses. He is a doctor who has been touched by the heart of the Lord. He has such compassion, and I was kidding a little bit about it, because we were standing there and somebody said, “Boy, my head hurts.” He immediately exerted compassion. “Where does it hurt? How long have you had it.” I love watching him so I decided to test him a bit. At the dinner table I was sitting beside him and I said, “Boy I hurt my finger.” “You hurt your finger?” “Yeah, I hurt my finger. Want to kiss it?” Anyway, he realized I was putting him on a bit, and I said, “I don’t know whether I’m sick or not. I just like to hear you.” It is nice to have a doctor who is compassionate? You probably run into the other type.

I was talking to a doctor once for about a half an hour about my problem and so forth. He said at the end of that, “What did you say your name was?” You ever have that feeling? You know, he had my whole report sitting in front of you. We had been talking for thirty minutes and he said, “What did you say your name was?” I mean, the guy is a little short on compassion.

Jesus knows your name. He has your hairs all counted, and He can subtract. He knows everything about you, and He cares. “The compassion of the Lord.”—Every time He is demonstrating His power. When He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion (Matthew 9:36). That is a beautiful thing.

We have to look at the story in John 9. This demonstrates His power over blindness:

And as [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man which was blind from [his] birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? (John 9:1-2).

The first thing that I learn from this is that some sickness does result from sinning, but some sickness is not the result of specific sinning (though all sickness is a result of original sin and depravity). Did you catch that? When a person has a cold, you do not say, “Ahh. Something wrong in your life, huh?” “Yeah, there is something wrong. I was out in the cold when I should have had a jacket on.” You know, somebody gets the flu: “Brother, you need to repent.” I mean, it is obvious.

The Bible does teach that some sickness results from sin. There is sin that leads to physical death (1 John 5:16). There are some who actually get sick and die because they treat improperly, in a frivolous manner, the bread and the cup as described in 1 Corinthians 11. Do not think that God will not bring sickness as a consequence of sinning, because He does.

It makes we wonder about the question, “Do you think AIDS is a result of sin? Is it not possible that somebody could get AIDS who did not sin specifically? Yes. Children. Blood transfusion, etc. A plague is a terrible thing. There are all kinds of plagues hitting our planet now. They have mentioned that one about fish. That was not exciting to read! “What’s for dinner tonight?” “Probably fish.” No. They have now confirmed that there are some very terrible problems in our

ocean water and fish, but now they are saying it can affect humans. The fish industry is saying now that they know it can. No matter how much they cook it, it is still there. This is going to cause a little problem in the fish industry for a while.

Now, the Lord told us that these things were going to happen. In the Tribulation they will accelerate. But let us say that this case of AIDS was not from a transfusion. It was not a child that was a victim of this. What is the normal way that one gets AIDS? Originally it was homosexuality. Now, we know that it is caused by multiple sex partners, because even heterosexuals get it. In a study of 5,000 married couples who had never had sex outside of their own marriage, there was not one single example of sexual disease. The *New England Journal of Medicine* wrote an interesting article in which they could not solve the problem. They did not understand. Let me explain why they do not get it. The reason that they do not understand is very simple if you think about it. If you leave God and sin out of the equation, it does not make sense.

Let us suppose that a couple has sex over a twenty-year period of time. Their argument is, “Since the anatomy procedure of this is the same, what difference would it make if the total amount of times between the one couple—let us say a thousand just for figuring here—and suppose that you had sex only once with a thousand different people.” You have actually engaged in the physical act from an anatomy point of view the exact same amount of time as the couple who was married that had sex only with each other. So you see the reason why they are confused is that when they match this, it never explains the problem. From a pure physical anatomy point of view, there is no answer to this. Not one. How can a person in marriage commit the physical act of intercourse the same amount of times as someone who does it with several other people the same amount of times. Sometimes it is even less. Why is it that they acquire a sexual disease, but the married

couple, who has not had sex with anybody else, never contracts these diseases? Their basic argument at the end was, “We have no explanation.” They do not know.

Some of us are dumb enough to think that we know, because God said in 1 Corinthians 6:18 that every sin that a man does is outside the body except one. “He who commits fornication [sexual sin] is sinning against his own body.” There is only one sin that affects the physical body according to what God said—the rest of them are all emotional. Anger, wrath, pride, *etc.*, all affect your emotions, which does have some health implications, but there is only one sin that will affect the physical process of the body. That sin is fornication: having sex with somebody besides your husband or wife. Is that not interesting?

A lot of people are troubled because they carry it to extremes. There are a lot of modern day evangelists and healers who say, “If you are sick, then there is something wrong. You need to repent and then it will go away.” No, that is not true at all. Jesus made it clear here, “This man didn’t sin.” It was not because his parents sinned. “Oh by the way, you are not a drunk ‘cause your parents were.” That is also going around the recovery movement. Here is another one. “God said He’d bring judgment to the third and fourth generations. So your grandkids and great grandkids have to suffer.” Wrong! That is an idiom. If you continue to sin, it does not matter how long the generations go, it will continue to bring judgment. Your kids will not suffer because of your sins. Nor will you suffer because of your kids. The Bible says every man shall bear his own iniquities. Ezekiel 18 is very clear on it.

What do we learn from this? Some physical problems, even from birth (*e.g.*, genetic disorders) are not the result of specific sinning. All sickness results from the original fall and curse, yet it is not the result of specific sinning. Do not say that it is. You see somebody with a deformity, do not

say, “Somebody sinned. Maybe his dad did.” No, that is not true. Now many of us can sit here and easy deal with this if it is not our problem, but I will tell you something that I have observed over and over again. You show me a couple that loves the Lord, loves the Bible, and has followed God, but if they have a deformed child, something snaps in their emotions. They call the pastor and say, “What have we done to deserve this?” It happens over and over again. The answer is “Nothing.” First of all, I like to tell people we are all physically handicapped. Why do we even say somebody is handicapped? If somebody has only one arm, are they something less than you with two arms? No, with two you can get into more trouble. We are all physically handicapped. Do you not understand that? Time will prove this to be true.

This has hurt the church for years. We need to be straight. Jesus cleared it up. Then why is this guy in this problem? He has been blind from his birth. Jesus said, “That the works of God might be manifest in him.” God allows many of these things to happen so that He can demonstrate His mighty power in their life.

He never healed the physical blindness of Fanny Crosby, but boy did He give her spiritual insight that no one else had, as she wrote thousands of hymns like, “Face to Face with Christ My Savior.” She never saw once in her entire life, and people who knew her said that she saw a lot more than most folks did. You had better be careful what you say.

Now Christ also had power over death. This is the crowning issue. Let us go to John 5:21. “For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, or makes them alive, even so the Son quickeneth, makes alive whom He will.” Then a few verses later it says:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:25-29)

All the evil, wicked dead will be resurrected to stand before God at the great White Throne Judgment according to Revelation 20. Everybody will be resurrected, but the difference in time is a thousand years. Jesus proves this in John 11:1-4:

Now a certain [man] was sick, [named] Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was [that] Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard [that], he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Would you think that it would be a problem in your mind if you were one of the disciples? You heard that and then you heard that Lazarus died. “Hey, wait a minute. You said it wasn’t unto death.” “Oh I mean, the purpose of that illness was not to bring his death.” The purpose of that illness which caused his death was to bring glory to God. Make sure you read that right.

Then Jesus said to Martha:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me,
though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and
believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:25-
26)

Then Jesus comes to the grave, which is a cave. There is a stone over it, and so he says, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the same one who said she believed that He could raise the dead, said, “Lord he has been there four days. He stinks to high heaven” (My translation). That’s what she said, “He stinks.” Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone, and Jesus lifted up His eye. I bet they are all thankful that He did not ask them to climb down in the grave and pull him out. “Father, I thank Thee that You have heard Me. I know that You hear Me always but because of the people which stand by I said it that they will believe that You sent Me.” So He said, “Lazarus come forth!” Do you ever think what would happen if He had not mentioned “Lazarus”? In John 5, He said, “All would hear His voice and come forth.” Imagine if He had just said, “Come forth!” Everybody would have come out of the grave. But He said, “Lazarus come forth,” and he came forth. He was all bound up with the grave clothes. Can you hear him standing there? Jesus says, “loose him and let him go.” I love that story.

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. (John 11:45)

They even went to the Pharisees and told them what He had done. Boy I will tell you that the resurrection of Lazarus caused a little excitement.

The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him. (John 12:17-19)

Now in one of the Gospels it says, concerning this triumphal entry, that the chief priests, the scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus, “Rebuke these people.” The people were shouting out, “Hosanna! (Save us now). Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Now that was supposed to be done at Passover. It is a part of the *Hallel*, but they were throwing palm branches which you do only at Tabernacles, which is the sign that the kingdom has come. They were declaring Him to be king and going to set up His kingdom. They have confused the feasts here, and the religious leaders wanted to stop these people. “Rebuke them! They are saying wrong things.” What did Jesus say? “If I did that then the stones would cry out.”

You are now ready for your Hebrew lesson of the day. This last trip when we were on the Mount of Olives, we tried to walk down that old ancient road that Jesus would have walked down (from

Bethany and Bethphage down across the Kidron Valley over to Jerusalem). As you are walking down that road, it is very obvious what is on the left side—a Jewish cemetery that has been there since the days of Christ. The Jews always bury on a mountain, and Arabs will always bury in a valley. When the Jews bury they put them under the ground, but they put what looks like a little casket, which are really made out of stone, on top of it. All Jewish burial sites have this sticking up. A lot of people make the mistake and think the body is in there, but it is not because the bodies are actually in the ground. They just make this thing in honor, functioning as a little grave marker, but it looks like a little casket. Now they are all over the Mount of Olives, and go back all the way to the time of Christ.

If you looked closely at all those grave sites, you will notice that on top of those stone caskets are piles of rocks. When Orthodox Jews honor their dead they do not put flowers on the grave because they decay and, therefore, represent the lack of life and the beauty of man which fades away. Instead, they put rocks on the grave. That is what they do on top of the grave site to honor the dead.

Remember what Jesus said, as they were walking past that grave site. The religious leaders first said, “Rebuke these people!” Jesus’ response, “If I rebuke these people, the stones would cry out.” What is He talking about? He is talking about resurrection—all who hear. What was the immediate issue that brought them all together? The resurrection of Lazarus. If I stop them, why all the stones would cry out? Because there is a real fascinating play on the whole Jewish burial system. Amen? This is a just a little touch—just a little—to get you messed up for the day.

Let us pray.

Thank You for Your Word. Thank You that we can study about our blessed Lord. Thank You that He had miraculous power, not only over creation and disease, but over death itself. Teach us, Lord, to put our confidence in the One who can do anything—the One who will always do right. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Father, we know that when we come to the death of Jesus Christ, we come to sacred ground. We know that there is no issue in all the Bible that is as important to Your mind and heart and plan as this one. You told us that He was a lamb slain before the foundation of the world. There was no accident or coincidence. He was not a victim of circumstances. He died because You ordained it from eternity past. You planned all the circumstances of it. You hardened the heart of religious leaders to accuse Him falsely. You told us long ago in the prophets that You would do that and that they would not listen. All this was done to put Him on the cross to die for our sins that we might have everlasting life. We marvel at Your plan, and pray that You will deepen our understanding of the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. It is in the precious name of our Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, that we pray. Amen.

The death of Christ sometimes is nothing more than a discussion of the location. Having just returned from Israel, I am very aware of that. Inside of the present city walls, but outside of the walls in Jesus' day, is what we call the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. It is a monstrous church that represents many religions. It claims to be over the site of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. The church certainly gets in the way, and by the way, for those of you have ever heard about it, a decision has been made to knock down a lot of those buildings. They have been built over this site and so it is needed that they expose it as it was, so that people can see it better. That is a good move, but this is the Catholic view and it has a lot of tradition behind it. The wall of

ancient Jerusalem at the time of Christ, has been discovered in this area, and this site is outside the wall—exactly like the Bible says. Because it is inside of the present city walls, it makes a lot of Evangelicals nervous. The church itself is so awful looking and all of its traditions cloud the issue. But from strictly a scholastic point of view, is an interesting thing. Now it is on the west side of Jerusalem—the opposite side of where the Mount of Olives is.

North of Jerusalem (north of the Damascus Gate) is another site that Evangelicals claim as their own. It is called the Garden Tomb. They also have been building a lot and making this into a beautiful garden. You say, “Well just because there is a garden today doesn’t mean there was a garden at the time of the Lord.” The Bible says near the place where He was crucified was a garden. To have a garden in a dry, barren desert you need water. Right here in front of this area is a cistern of water. There are only three such systems in all of Jerusalem from ancient times. This one holds over 250,000 gallons of water. Also in the same location is an ancient wine press, which of course means that a vineyard was near by. Thus, it is pretty strong proof that there was a garden there.

Now when they take you to see the place of the skull, it is kind of hard to visualize it, but people do try to see the skull. I am not sure about all this. First of all, this was cut out years ago. There is a bus station there now. Its noise causes you to have a little problem meditating on the death of Christ, but around the side of this hill is the Church of St. Stephen and that church commemorates the stoning of Stephen. Remember that Jesus was crucified at the place of the skull, Golgotha. In Jewish thinking, when a person was killed or stoned to death, it was not on a hill. You know, on a hill far away stood an old rugged cross. I am sorry, but it was not on a hill. The Romans did not crucify on a hill either. They would have stoned him at the foot of that hill—of the place of the

skull. There are a lot of interesting things. The Romans would have crucified along the road normally.

Now the Garden Tomb is, of course, a beautiful thing to see. The Bible said that near where He died there was a garden and in there was a tomb that no man had ever laid. Joseph of Aramethea. This is radical but I just want you to understand that the place is not that significant to me. I do not think either one of those places is the place. I am a little radical on this, and I am sure the other teachers here would be glad to refute what I say. That is okay. I just want my opinion to be heard. I do not think that any of these places are the place.

It is interesting that the nation of Israel agrees with me—or I agree with them. The rabbis all tell you where *Yeshua* was crucified. You see, He had to be crucified on the Mount of Olives. Why? Because it is the only place where you could have seen the veil of the temple rent, which is what the Bible says. You see, if you are on the Mount of Olives then you would be looking down at that gigantic temple and you could see the veil of the temple rent or torn in two. That is what the Bible says.

Because I am a Bible literalist, there is no way that anybody could have seen that. The answer other people give is that, “Well, it was just reported.” But no, they saw it! I am just a gung-ho person for details. It also says that He was hung on a tree. No, the idea of this little neat wooden cross came out of tradition. I think what happened is that He carried a beam, and not a cross. The beam was nailed up to an olive tree and He was hung on the tree. Again, I am a Bible literalist. The Bible says He hung on a tree. If the Bible says so, I believe it. I do not want to argue with you. Well, a little bit, but I think it was on the Mount of Olives. I think that is where He died.

There are a lot of other wonderful things to connect there, because when He destroys all the nations of the world after the Battle of Armageddon, He will ascend up to the Mount of Olives (the place where He died). His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives in triumph. “It is finished.”

I do not want to get into this preaching. Why did Jesus die? You can probably rattle that off real quick, but I am going to make it miserable for you, because we are going to go through fifteen different reasons why Jesus died.

Look at Matthew 27. Jon Courson, whom I was listening to this morning, described the scourging of Christ in detail.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band [of soldiers]. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put [it] upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify [him].

(Matthew 27:27-31)

I never can read this without seeing the place. I have had many trips to Israel and Jerusalem, but we never miss going into the ancient Tower of Antonio, down to that ground floor of the ancient Roman stones of that ancient place. There are huge Roman stones. There where Jesus was taken,

in the stone, still sitting there today carved in the rock is the game of the king, which the Roman soldiers played. They did it with many prisoners. That is what we believe is happening right here. It is interesting when you go in there, because a lot of the other sites people are talking because all kinds of people are visiting Israel (some know the Lord and some do not), but at this particular place, when you go down these stairs into this area underneath the present buildings, I have noticed that no matter whether they are unbelievers or some other religion, there is something that happens to people down there. First of all when you get down there, you are realizing, “Hey, this is the actual spot. There is no doubt about it.”

This particular place has been run for years by the Sisters of Mount Zion, a Roman Catholic convent. The original sisters of Mount Zion are no longer alive or present in Israel to give their lecture, but these sisters were in my opinion some of the greatest preachers the world has ever known. They were evangelical Catholic women, and they did not go along with a lot of stuff in the Catholic Church, even though they were nuns. They loved the Lord with all their hearts, and would preach the gospel there. There was one named Sister Agnes, and I heard her many times. I could hardly wait to hear her again. There is not a single preacher I have heard (e.g., Billy Graham or otherwise) who possibly could tell the gospel like this woman. She did it many times a day—day after day. It is a wonderful sight to see her weep every time she talked about her Savior and told the story of what happened there. One can never forget it. I think we take a little lightly the suffering of our Lord. I think we are just a little too quick to go past the details.

There, embedded in that ancient Roman rock, from that time and at that very place, is dug into the rock the game of the king. It is explained to you how they would mock a person who claimed to have some authority. That is where they mocked Jesus.

The majority of men who were scourged by the Romans died under the scourging. It lacerated the back to the point it was nothing but hamburger meat. It was terrible. And then to put a robe on it! The robe would stick in there, of course. Then to stick that crown of thorns on His head and jam it into His skull! And then to continue to spit on Him! Then take that rod, that scepter, which is solid iron and beat Him with it. By the way, the Greek text indicates in several of the Gospels that they repeatedly beat Him with their fists in addition to the rod. If you want to know what they did to our Lord, just read Isaiah where it says, “His visage was marred beyond recognition.” There are all these nice little pictures we have in the Christian bookstore of Jesus on the cross, but they are not telling the truth. You could not even recognize Him! He was beat to a pulp. His face was tortured unmercifully. The Romans just laughed, mocked, and spat on Him.

Let us pick it up at Matthew 27:31, “And after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him.” Can you imagine what that must have felt like, to have that robe pulled off? “And put His own raiment on Him and led Him away.” They led Him away to crucify Him.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted [thereof], he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his

head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF
THE JEWS. (Matthew 27:32-37)

Now if you compare all of the Gospels (each man is saying what he needed to say from what was on the cross), what was on the cross was written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew. Greek was used because of the Hellenistic culture and many spoke Greek and it was spoken around the world. Latin was used because of the Romans, of course. Hebrew was used because they wanted the Jews to see it. Now the first word was *Yehoshuah* (Jesus). The first letter of that is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It is the little yod, which looks like an apostrophe. (Hebrew is read from right to left.) *Yehoshuah* and according to the Bible it was “Jesus the Nazarene.” The next word was *ha Nazarite*. The next word would be “and,” which is what we call a *wha*. It is like a little line with a hook on top. The next one would be the king of Jews. *Hamelech Yudio*.

When Jews read Hebrew, from right to left, it is automatic with their brains and learning patterns in language. They see the first letter of every word. That is why a lot of acrostics in the Bible deal with the first letters—because that is Jewish poetry. They were trained to think that way—to see the first letter.

Now turn over to John 19:19, as a few details here are filled in.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put [it] on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, [and] Greek, [and] Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews

to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. (John 19:19-22)

Now why were they so upset by what was on the cross? What you had on the cross reading from right to left in the first letter, are the four letters of the Tetragrammaton (the name of *Yahweh* the Lord). I say, “hallelujah!” There, every Jew who always reads the first letter of every word is reading without any mistake that He is *Yahweh*. They would have been stunned by what they saw. The four letters of the name of God, and it was God’s testimony to who was dying. For God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. That is why the Jews begged Pilate, “Take that off.” Pilate said, “What I have written, I have written. I’m not changing it. I don’t want anything to do with you, religious leaders.” Is that not interesting?

Now, let us keep reading our story and see what happened.

Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest [it] in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking [him], with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him:

for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. (Matthew 27:38-44)

We are told that the thieves “cast the same in his teeth.” In others words, they were giving insults. Notice that it is “thieves” plural. Both of them were insulting the Lord. Look over at Luke 23:39, “One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him saying, if Thou be Messiah save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him....” Originally he was also insulting, but now, something has happened. What happened? I would like to suggest to you on the basis of the details of the Bible, that these two men were put up there first. Jesus was then put up, and then they tacked on that title, and this man read the title *Yahweh*. All we know is that this verse precedes that discussion.

But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. (Luke 23:40-43)

This refers to the abode of all the righteous dead. Jesus was apparently going to go down there and say, “hello.” It is very interesting.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard [that], said, This [man] calleth for Elijah. (Matthew 27:45-47)

Some of you probably have Bibles that say in the footnote that this is Aramaic. Some of your new translations might even have “Eloi, Eloi.” This is an argument that Jesus spoke Aramaic. That is what they saw, but it could not be Aramaic, because He had to speak Hebrew. What they heard Him caused them to think He was calling for Elijah. The abbreviated nickname of Elijah is still the same today as it was in the first century: Eli. *El* means “God,” and the little *i* is the pronoun “my.” “My God, My God.” It is also the abbreviated name of Elijah. I had a guide named Elijah in the past, and we called him Eli. They still call him the same thing. Christ was speaking Hebrew, and that is obvious by the fact that they said, “He’s calling for Elijah.”

And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled [it] with vinegar, and put [it] on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. (Matthew 27:48-49)

This could be based upon Malachi 4:5-6 because Elijah is to come before the Messiah.

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from

the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;
And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints
which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his
resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto
many. (Matthew 27:50-53)

This is an interesting passage, is it not? These people died again, but that is a visible demonstration of the power of Christ and what had happened here.

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching
Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they
feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. (Matthew
27:54)

They saw these things. They saw the veil of temple rent. “They feared greatly saying, truly this was the Son of God.”

And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed
Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was
Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and
the mother of Zebedee's children. (Matthew 27:55-56)

Then it is the story of Joseph of Aramethea taking the body and putting it into his grave. That is amazing, is it not? The crucifixion.

Why did Jesus die? Hebrews 10:7 says that it was to do the will of God:

Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and [offering] for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure [therein]; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all]. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:7-14)

Are you not glad that He did the will of God? It is by the will of God, not the will of men, that we are saved or sanctified. It was specifically the will of our Savior that caused Him to go to the cross.

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:13)

Second, Jesus died to save sinners. This is a frequent message in the Bible.

But go ye and learn what [that] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Matthew 9:13)

In Luke 19:10, He said to Zacchaeus, “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” A lost sinner!

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. (1 Timothy 1:15)

Do you realize that you are a sinner, and apart from the death of Christ you will be lost forever? Several years ago, I had a visible illustration that happened to me of what it is to be lost. Maybe you have done this too. I went to Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, which are located about 750 feet below the ground. There is a little path that takes you out to a little seating area that they call the Chapel of the Rocks. You hear the guide talk about these caverns. They are amazing and spectacular! During the course of the guide’s lecture he said, “How many of you know what it’s like to be lost?” Everybody was skeptical. He said, “Well, in a moment we’re going to give you a chance to experience it. So we’re going to turn the lights out in Carlsbad Caverns for just a few moments.” He said, “They tell us that if a man were down here for seven days in this condition, he would be totally insane.” Then they turned the lights out. It did not take but five seconds until people were begging him to turn the lights back on. You tried to move your hand to feel motion, but you could not even see your hand. He warned us about not falling over the side. So a lot of people got down on the ground. So did I. I bumped into an elderly lady who was scared to death,

so he turned the lights back on. It was a frightening experience, and I thought, again, why Jesus died—to save lost sinners.

Hell will be a place of incredible lostness. There will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The guide at Carlsbad was not a Christian, but actually quoted that verse as an explanation of what would happen to somebody who would stay in that condition where there is no light at all. In darkness you lose direction. You lose the ability to even feel physical things, like your body itself and where it is. Lost! To think that the Bible says, “lost forever.” It is outer darkness. Hell is no party time. Jesus came to save lost sinners. He seeks to save them. How about you?

Third, He came to fulfill the law. In the Sermon on the Mount we have a statement, which causes some people to struggle.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I
am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you,
Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise
pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:17-18)

Now what did He mean by “to fulfill the law”? That is the reason He came, but if He said, “I come to give My life for the world,” then why did He say I am come to fulfill the law? Romans 10:4 says, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to those who believe.” It is amazing to me how some people read this saying, “Somehow the law is no good or whatever.” We do not even understand what is being said. The heart and soul of the law, class, is the sacrificial system. The penalties for breaking the law are handled by the sacrificial system. Everything that is pictured there is pointing to God’s way that man can come to Him. How can we approach a holy

God? The answer is through sacrifice. “The blood of bulls and goats can never take away sins.”

They were types and illustrations. The law is a school master (or a tutor) to lead us to the Messiah that we might be justified by faith. There is nothing wrong with the law. If you preach it correctly, you will see Jesus on every page. The law points to the Savior as the only solution for man’s sin.

There are two ways to look at this:

1. “Oh those sacrifices. They never took away sin. What a bunch of junk the Jews were in. We got Jesus.”
2. “Wait a minute. Jesus is the fulfillment of what that law is telling the people.”

It is very interesting to just look at the Bible in that way. For everything that the law said, Jesus was the answer to. Everything!

The fourth reason that Christ died according to the Bible is to redeem those who are under the law. Now this point deals with the law’s condemnation. How many lies does it take to make a liar? Just one. How many sins does it take to make a sinner? James 2:10 says, “If you offend in one point of the law, you are guilty of all of it.” Now, there is a curse on the law. If you break God’s law, there is a whole list of curses or penalties. The very last curse mentioned in the law is, “Cursed is he who hangs on a tree.” It was the worst thing that could happen to a Jew. You can understand why David’s heart was broken when Absalom was hung in a tree.

Go to Galatians 3 and watch this. It is interesting to me that the one curse that is the worst thing imaginable to a Jew is the particular penalty that Jesus took.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. (Galatians 3:13)

“The soul that sins must die,” and people teach that and they teach it correctly, but they do not tell them all they need to tell them sometimes. How was Christ made a curse for us? Paul then quotes Deuteronomy 21, “Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.”

The very method that Christ chose was the worst curse in the law. Why did He do this? That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

“You are not redeemed,” says 1 Peter 1:18, “with corruptible things of silver and gold.” All the money in the world cannot buy your redemption. You were redeemed by the precious blood of the Messiah as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. To this I say, “Hallelujah!”

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

Let me explain this to you. Paul is talking about the slave market, which were all over the ancient Roman world. They usually were located in the *agora*, the marketplace. The word *agora* is a Greek word for “purchase” or “buying market.” The word “redeemed” is *agoradzo* (or *exagoradzo*, “to buy out of.”) It is translated as “redeem” in the Bible. Now, when these slaves were captured, they were brought to these slave markets and you could buy a slave. They would auction them off and you could buy a slave by paying the purchase price. Paul teaches that you were “bought with a price, therefore, glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The Bible says that Christ was a “ransom price for you that believe.” You see, the initial thing of buying a slave in the market, is the first step of redemption. It requires a price, and for us, that price was the precious blood of Christ. He has redeemed you.

There is another word that means that a former slave owner, who—for some reason or another—does not like you. You are incorrigible and rebellious. He could kill you if he wanted to, but he wants to get some money off of you so he brings you to the slave market in hopes that some other owner will buy you. The new owner redeems you from being a slave to that owner to become his slave. The Bible uses that word of our redemption also. Is that not interesting? We have left a state of being Satan’s slave, and we are now a slave of Jesus Christ. This is how Paul writes to most of the Christians. We are a bondservant, *doulos*, of the Lord Jesus Christ, because He bought us and paid the price.

There is another word for redemption, which is a compound Greek word that speaks about a man who really likes this slave. He has a wonderful wife and five children over here and is just begging somebody to set him free. This man has a lot of money and does not really worry about losing the money. He sees this dear guy, likes him and fell in love with his kids or something like that. So, he decides to buy him out of the slave market to set him free. He will never be a slave

again. That word is also used of us! You are no longer a slave to sin, death, hell or Satan, because you have been redeemed! You have been bought out of the slave market of sin. You do not belong there any more. To this I say, “Hallelujah!”

But it gets even better. There is one more thing a man can do. Let us suppose that he took the gentleman and his family home and he really likes this guy. In fact, he falls in love with him and thinks, “You are just like a son to me. You know what, I don’t have any heirs and I’ve got a big, huge property here and I’ll tell you what, I really like you. So I’m going to officially adopt you as my son and all that I have belongs to you.” When Jesus redeemed you, He also adopted you as His son. You are now joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Is that not great? I would say that our redemption is pretty good. What do you say? It is pretty good.

So far, Jesus died to:

1. Do the will of God.
2. Save lost sinners.
3. Fulfill the law.
4. Redeem those who are under the law.

Fifth, Jesus died to demonstrate God’s righteousness. Now, God’s character is manifested in a host of ways in the Bible: through His miracles, judgments, the universe He created. He tells us about Himself. “The heavens declare the glory of God.” One of God’s essential attributes is righteousness. There is no sin in Him. He possesses justice and judgment. When Jesus died on the cross, He demonstrated the righteousness of God. It is almost a paradox. Let me explain.

How could God be righteous in allowing an innocent person to die for others? It does not sound just and fair to me. Why does He have to die for what He did not do? How does that demonstrate righteousness?

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.
(Romans 3:24-25)

In other words, He has been putting up with you, to declare His righteousness, so that He might be just. He has to deal with sin.

To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.
(Romans 3:26)

What is it talking about? When God poured out His wrath on Jesus all the suffering and all the torture of His death on the cross showed that He was just in paying for sin. Sin had to be paid for. It had to be dealt with, or else God would not be just. The only way that God would be able to justify us (to declare us righteous), is if the one who bore the penalty was not guilty of anything.

Let me put it to you another way with a simple illustration that I read years ago and cut out of the paper. It took place in the Midwest, in a little small town. It was kind of big news in this town because the judge had to face his own son in his own court. His son apparently had, I forget all

the details, stolen a car. I do not know what else. He had to be sentenced in front of his own dad. Of course, that little town just all turned out to see what was going to go on in the court room. They were all kind of shocked because the kid came in front of his dad to be sentenced and there was no mercy at all. He fined him the maximum penalty of the law. I do not know what it was (probably five or ten thousand dollars). It was that or prison. He fined him all this money and the people were shocked. Then before they could even catch their breath, the judge got up out of his seat, and walked over to the rack. He took off his political robe and put it on the rack. He came over and stood beside his boy and put his arm around his son. Then he said, “Son as your judge I had to sentence you, but as your father, I will pay the penalty for you.”

I cut that little bit out because it is a good illustration. As our judge, to be righteous, He has to deal with sin, but as our loving, heavenly Father, He sent His Son to die in our place. As judge, He had to sentence us, but as our Father He paid the penalty for us through His own Son. It is absolutely amazing!

For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that
we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

I am declared righteous because someone paid my penalty. Amen!

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

One of the most common things that people say is, “Jesus died to manifest His love to us.” Of course, that is true, but it was not merely that. Liberal theology has always held that the point of the death of Christ is to show us what love is all about. “God is love.” The Unity people even said that is all God is—just a principle of love.

He did show His love. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

Romans 5:8, “God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” But do not make the mistake that a lot of people do. They make this a little more syrupy than they should. We are not talking about the gushy romantic, emotional vibes that you and I have with one another. We are talking about unconditional love. It is interesting, in the passages that it portrays us as being unworthy of it, that God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. The depth of God’s love is to love the unlovely. To love somebody who did not deserve it, but deserved hell instead.

This even involved laying down His life (1 John 3:16). “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). God did not love you because you loved Him. You loved Him because He loved you. This makes all the difference in the world. Some say, “Oh, if you just really love the Lord, He will love you back.” No, He will love you even if you do not love Him back. We learn a lot about what *agape* is all about, and that is the sacrificial and unconditional love of God.

Another purpose of the death of the Lord Jesus is to bring us to God. This is no small task in that God is who He is, and man is who he is. To bring us to God, required the death of Jesus Christ.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom [are] all things, and by whom [are] all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:9-10)

Now look at 1 Peter 3:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

It says, point blank, “that He might bring us to God.” Back in Hebrews 2 it brings up another critical issue that happened when Jesus died.

Christ died to destroy the devil’s power. What was that power? The power of death. The devil is a destroyer. If you go after his baits and it is going to destroy your life. Everything he entices us with, as attractive as it may be, will destroy your life. You know all of his attempts to make it attractive, but they do not alter the fact.

I was watching Larry King, and there was this actor who has had this alcohol problem that was real serious. He was saying how in the movies he was in part of the pattern of most movies, you come into somebody’s house and they say, “Do you want a drink?” Then they go over and pour them a drink or whatever. It is kind of like a part of every single script. He said it looked so

attractive and cool to him. So he put a bar in his home. Everybody was really complementing him on this beautiful bar and nice portrayal of all kinds of liquors. Then the guy almost lost his life—that which was attractive to him and made him so popular almost destroyed his life. Of course, it does destroy a lot of people's lives.

Whether it is drugs, sex, or whatever, it is interesting that everything the devil has, all of his baits and enticements, are intended to destroy you and me. He gives us temporary relief or pleasure to entice us. Then he destroys us with it.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,
he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death
he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the
devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their
lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

I do not know if it is in your heart yet, but you are not under the devil's control anymore, after you come to Christ. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." The devil's power over you has been broken, and you do not have to be a slave to sin anymore.

Christ also died to be a merciful and faithful high priest. Do you realize that if Jesus never became a man, if He never went to the cross, then we could continue to accuse Him that He did not understand what we went through.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his]
brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in

things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Hebrews 2:17-18)

In Hebrews 4, we see the impact of this.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

He became man and suffered and died in our place. Therefore, He can be a merciful and faithful high priest. Thank God for it!

Christ also came to serve and to give His life as a ransom. Now, we have a problem here about the death of Christ and I want you to put your finger in both passages. I want you to understand these passages. That is a big hint, is it not? The two passages are Matthew 20:28 and 1 Timothy 2:5-6. Both of these passages say a similar phrase, but the conclusions are different. It looks like a contradiction, and it deals with the subject of Calvinism and Arminianism, concerning unlimited and limited atonement.

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28)

Christ has paid that purchase price to get you out of the slave market. Now the Greek uses the word for many. That is clear in the text.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (1 Timothy 2:5-6)

Now Matthew 28 says a “ransom for the many,” but 1 Timothy 2:6 says a “ransom for all.” Which is it? Well, it is actually both. The answer is found in the preposition. Though the English preposition “for” is the same in both cases, it is not in Greek.

You need to know this. In Matthew 20:28 the preposition used is *anti*, which in English today means “against.” That is not its original meaning. It originally meant “in the stead of.” It is a word of substitution. For instance, the Antichrist is not simply against Christ, although he is, but he is a substitution Christ. He is a counterfeit, who is in the stead of Christ. In Matthew 20:28, Christ died in the stead of the many—obviously the many who believe in Him. Did Christ’s death substitute for those who believe in Him? The answer is yes. Did He die for the elect? Absolutely!

Now in 1 Timothy 2:6, it says that He is a ransom for all. Here it is not *anti*, but the Greek preposition is *huper*. The word means “in the behalf of.” It is a word of sufficiency. Matthew 20:28 is *anti*, a word of substitution, and 1 Timothy 2:6 is *huper*, a word of sufficiency. What do

we mean? Was Christ's death in the behalf of all, whether they believe in Him or not?

Absolutely! It was sufficient. Why? Because God was in Christ. God's life would equal the sum total of all human life, which He Himself created. Sure it was sufficient, but it is only efficient—it only works for those who believe.

So you say, "Which belief do you believe? Are you a Calvinist or an Arminian?" Well, I am a Calvinist if you mean, "Did Christ die for the elect?" But I am an Arminian if you mean, "Did Christ die for the whole world?" I believe them both. Does everybody understand? Some people say, "Well you're a Calminian." No. I am just a Bible preacher. That is all. The Bible indicates that He was ransom in the stead of the many who believe in Him. He is a ransom also on the behalf of all men. Okay.

He also died in order to reconcile us to God. Let us suppose that you and a friend of yours have a bad relationship. Do you have anybody like that? Somebody from the past or somebody you are sitting next to right now, or is across the room and you do not dare get close to them. Is there somebody that you just do not like? You do not get along? We could start a riot here. We all have these situations in life and sometimes we say, "Hey, why don't you get reconciled with that person?" Now that assumes that there is some hostility between the two of you. There is something wrong. There is a barrier between the two of you. Now it could be the fault of both of you (e.g., Some misinterpretations or misunderstandings, something was said and you took it wrong, or it was said with a lack of sensitivity to your feelings, etc.). Life is filled with this. People often wear their heart on their sleeve, and no matter what you say to them, they are hurt. It is as if their mission in life to tell you that they are hurt. This is what I call "Christian masochism." You just want to be pained again today. You feel better hitting your head against the wall, because it feels so good when you stop.

So what do we do to straighten it out? It is a tough thing. A lot of people go through life and never straighten anything out, because they do not have the courage to go up and say, “Hey look, there is something wrong. I said something and you said something.” Or, “Here’s what I think...,” or whatever. People do not like to do that. They would rather mope and sit soak and sour. Their pride keeps them from getting it straightened out.

Do you suppose that the pride of man could keep him from straightening himself out with God? The problem in our relationship with God is not God’s problem. It is our problem. The hostility rests in our hearts. The Bible says we were enemies. We are the ones that need to be reconciled to God. God does not need to be reconciled to us. It is interesting to think that through. We are the ones that have the problem.

How have we offended God? Well, we have disobeyed Him. Our sin is a transgression of His law. That is why, when King David confessed his sin, he said, “Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight.” We have offended God!

God has already done something about it. He is willing to fellowship with you even though you have offended Him many times and will continue to do so. He is willing to fellowship with you because He solved it already. He has already reconciled you to Himself. How did He do that? By paying for whatever is wrong with you. He has already taken the enmity and the hostility away. He paid for your sin! You were reconciled to God when you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and now you can have fellowship with God. It is not a strained relationship anymore, because Jesus paid it all and all to Him we owe.

A few of those verses, like Romans 5:9-11, are just full of wonderful words.

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (Romans 5:9-11)

The Greek word used here speaks of reconciliation. We have received reconciliation that brings us joy. Are you not glad that you can fellowship with God even though you are such a stinker? Are you not glad God is not holding it against you?

A lot of us cannot get our relationships in life restored because one or the other parties involved is too proud to humble themselves. You know, I have always thought that we would get along much better if we just treat each other like dirty, rotten, depraved sinners. Is it not our expectations of people that drive us crazy? We put pressure on folks to perform. Then we get disappointed when they fail us, and our pride makes a big deal over it. You would be a lot happier if you would just humble yourself. I do not care who it is. I do not think it is God's will that you go up to people that you cannot stand and say, "I want to have an eternal ever-loving relationship with you." I think that some things need to be solved. "You said something that really hurt me." Now that is taking a big step because it may be rebuffed. The person may say, "Well so what." So the hostility gets deeper, but taking a chance might be worth it. "You know you said something to me that really hurt me." "Well what was that?" "Oh I didn't mean that." "You didn't?" "No, not at all." "Oh. I still don't like you."

There are a lot of things that, from a human point of view, the reconciliation of a relationship and getting restored is really tough. Here is a tough one for you. It is when you start liking somebody from the opposite sex and you are really interested. Do you know what I mean? You get pretty thick, and you might even write little love notes, saying, “I love you with all my heart.” Then you find out that that card, which said, “I love you with all my heart,” was purchased six at a time, because he sent it to six different people. Wound of wounds! So even in those little love relationships, people get uptight. Have you ever tried to break up gracefully? Talk about an emotional hassle, it can tear your life apart for weeks. You do not really want to keep going with a person, but you cannot figure out why you are so upset because you broke up. The Lord is working in our midst, but it is kind of funny, is it not?

We often do not relate that to our relationship with God. Are you not glad that He loves you no matter what? We are all conditional, and the reason that you are so upset, even though you wanted to break up with that person, is because you do not want rejection from anybody or anything. You are so proud that you want that person to be totally broken hearted that you would have the courage to leave them. You want them to suffer, even though you do not want to be with them. That is how emotional we are.

It is very hard to restore relationships. It is not like business. You cannot just say to the person, “We have been going together now for fifteen years and I want it stopped today, okay? You agree?” You know that just does not happen.

With God, there is no problem on His part—none at all. He loves you so much, even though He knows everything about you. There is not anything that you are going to tell Him that He does

not know. He knows your motives, how bad you are, what's wrong with you, and how many times you are going to stumble in life. He has counted all your wanderings away from Him. All your tears are all in His bottle. He knows about them all. There is not anything you are going to experience that He does not already know about. To think, He loves you! I think He should reconsider, don't you? But He loves you with an everlasting love.

I think one of the most wonderful things in the Bible is that we are reconciled. Colossians 1:20 says, we are reconciled by the blood of His cross. There is no problem anymore. Why are you fighting God? What is the big deal? He is not mad at you. He loves you! Some of us are mad, but He is not. You have been reconciled to God, which is a wonderful thing.

The Bible teaches that Christ also died in order to bear our sins.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that
we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose
stripes ye were healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

This is a beautiful verse. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many! Now there is an Old Testament Hebraic (or Jewish) background behind this. On the Day of Atonement, there is a goat that is killed and the blood is put in the holy of holies on the mercy seat by the high priest only, once a year. There is a second goat, called the *hazozel*, which they send out into the wilderness. The priest puts his hands on that goat and confesses all the sins of the people. Then the goat goes out. They send it away live and you are not supposed to ever go after that goat. The figure is, that the goat is bearing our sins away.

When the Bible says that He came to bear our sins, it is picturing that goat which was sent out into the wilderness. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

A thirteenth reason why He died was to take away our sins.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith,
Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the
world. (John 1:29)

The word “atonement” is *kaphir* in Hebrew, which means “to cover.” All the lambs that were killed in the past covered sin, but Jesus Christ took sin away. I need to give you an illustration.

My wife and I were invited out to dinner at a wealthy family’s house. It was a beautiful home. We were there with several other couples, and it was a party of about sixty people. It was a pretty big dinner party. The house was gorgeous; everything was just fantastic and beautifully set. There was this gorgeous Battenburg lace all over the table, with matching napkins and beautiful china. I am like a bull in a china shop. I do not know why, but I just bump into things. I do know why, but anyway, I am a little clumsy. My wife always makes me nervous. As we come up there, the moment she looked in and saw this scene, then patted me on the hand, saying, “Be careful dear.” I wish she would not say that. It makes me nervous throughout the whole night. So, I am doing pretty good, sitting in the middle of the table and talking. I was even keeping my pinkie up with the little cup and all that. I was being really cool. You know, using the right fork and knife. I never saw so many of them in my life. About half way through the meal, there was baked potatoes and gravy. I was talking and somebody asked for the gravy. The person was trying to

pass it to me, but then I turned and hit it. It went all over this Battenburg lace—all over the table. They were mopping up the gravy and I am trying to help, but they say, “Please leave it alone.” The lady was trying to be kind, and so she brings one of those Battenburg lace napkins and lays it over the gravy stain and says, “There, now nobody knows it is there.” Well, I knew it was there, and everybody else knew what was under that. She said, “Don’t worry about it. We’ll just send it to the cleaners tomorrow and it will all be gone.”

Then, I got to thinking about it. That is the difference between atonement in the Old Testament and Jesus taking sin away in the New Testament. You see, in the Old Testament the blood of the animal was just a covering, but the stain is still there. Jesus is the cleaning. He took the spot away and now there is no trace of it any more. It is brand new—washed white as snow! White as Battenburg lace! It is gone. Amen!

When it says that He took away our sins, it is pretty powerful. In 1 John 3:5 it says, “Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins and in Him was no sin.” Again, why did He come? Why was He manifested to the world? To take away our sins. I love that because, according to the Bible, He will not remember anything against you since He already took them away. They are gone!

Christ also came to forgive us our sins. I think we can understand this. Look at Ephesians 1:7, and Colossians 1:14, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” “If we confess our sins,” says 1 John 1:9, “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I think you and I understand forgiveness, do we not? You have a problem between you and another brother or sister and you say, “I’m really sorry. I should not have done that. Would you please forgive me?” Now at that point the person who has been sinned

against and is hearing this is trying to make a decision about whether or not this is really sincere. Yet the other person is a proud beast too. You say, “Wait a minute. I was the innocent victim.” You see, you are so proud that you are deciding whether or not the person who asked you to forgive them really deserves it. Let me clear this problem up for you. They do not deserve it, but neither do you. If you got what you deserved you would be in hell.

It is funny how when we are trying to forgive somebody, we are trying to make the decision about whether they deserve it or not, like we are playing God. Who do you think you are?

Here is another one. “I just don’t feel that you’re sincere.” What does that got to do with it? You mean to tell me that forgiveness is based on whether you feel like I am sincere? Jesus said that if a man comes to you and says, “I repent,” Christ says to forgive him. If he does it seven times in a day, (He didn’t say seven times in a lifetime or in a year or in a month), then this guy is what you call a repeating offender. I cannot tell you how many people say to me, “He’s done it the third time. That’s it. There’s no more forgiveness.” Jesus said if he does it seven times in a day, you are to forgive him if he comes. You say, “Well, if he did that seven times a day and came back and said he was sorry seven times a day, he obviously is insincere in his confession.” That is not what the Bible says. Apparently you have a problem. In your pride, you cannot forgive somebody, because you do not think that they deserve it, or because you think that they are going to repeat it again. In fact, you may even set some conditions upon them in order to prove that they are worthy of your forgiveness. “I will forgive you, but here is the way it has to take place.” You make a long little list of things in your mind or on paper. What gave you the right to do that? Who do you think you are?

I am sure glad that God does not work that way, because if He did, none of us would ever be forgiven. We are all guilty. You see it is a very interesting thing when the Bible says that He has forgiven us of our sins.

Have you ever said to somebody, “Well, I’ll forgive you but I’m not going to forget what you did!” Wait a minute, if you forgive somebody then it also involves forgetting it. Are you not glad that God, who knows everything, has voluntarily decided never to remember against you any more? When He forgives you, it is done. He does not bring it up; He does not have a gigantic sign on your way to class the next day saying, “John sinned against me, but I’ve forgiven him. Here’s what he did at 3:00 yesterday.” No, God does not do that, but some of us cannot forget how we have been hurt. There comes the pride again.

In my opinion it takes humility to forgive as well as to ask for it. You have to humble yourself both ways. You have to humble yourself to say that you are sorry for what was said or done. “Please forgive me.” You also have to humble yourself to say, “You bet. You’re forgiven.” Let me tell you something, there is nothing sweeter to restore any broken human relationship than forgiveness. There is no stronger cement to glue people together than the willingness to forgive. “I forgive you.” Those are sweet words. “Hey, you really mean that?” “I said it didn’t I?” You see, are you not glad that the forgiveness of God is perfect.

What is God’s forgiveness based on? The blood. It has already been paid for us. We do not have anything to talk about. Of course, you are forgiven. It is already taken care of.

Now turn to Ephesians 4. Maybe I am talking to somebody today who has got something against somebody and you have not let it go. It is eating you up, since you know your lack of forgiveness

can hurt you more than the person who needs your forgiveness. It can absolutely tear you apart, but you are unwilling to forgive somebody for what they have done to you.

Madge Rada, is in her seventies. She plays the organ at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa on Sunday morning. This dear woman was raped in a Denny's Restaurant and her throat slit by the young man's knife. That story was remarkable, because she not only forgave him, but she went and witnessed to him, and gave him a Bible. He came to know the Lord. It is a tremendous story. Now that is a pretty rough deal. He raped her and left her for dead, but she survived. I still remember the front page of the Newport Beach paper. The actual headline was one word in bold and black ink. It is the only one anyone ever remembered this in the paper. It said, FORGIVENESS! And it was the story of that. People could hardly believe it. Now what made Madge do that?

Let all bitterness and wrath and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31)

Here is the eye-opener on forgiveness. The normal word for "forgiveness" in Greek, *aphiemi*, is not in that text, but is the word "grace" (*charizo*). Let us read it that way, "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, gracing to one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath graced you." There is the secret of forgiveness. Grace gives us that which we do not deserve. When you forgive somebody, you do not forgive them because they deserve it, or they prove that their confession was really great and detailed, but you forgive them by gracing to them what they do not deserve. Forgiveness is the healing power of the Lord. You can change a person's life by

forgiving them for what they have done to you. What did Jesus say on the cross? “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

One final thing as to why Jesus died? He died to give us eternal life. Look at John 3, which is a beautiful passage for a lot of reasons.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so
must the Son of man be lifted up. (John 3:14)

Is Jesus a snake? “I thought the devil was a snake.” The snake was killed and put on a pole to remind us that death has set us free. As he lifted it up, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. There is a play on words here. In Philippians 2:9-11, just after saying that Christ humbled Himself to the death of the cross, it says:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a
name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in
earth, and [things] under the earth; And [that] every tongue
should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the
Father.

The words in Philippians 2:9, “God hath highly exalted Him,” are the same used for “to lift up” that is in John 3:14. You see, as Christ was put on the cross He was exalted. That which was humiliation and a terrible death with suffering was exaltation! People say He was exalted when He was ascended up on high to the right hand. This is true, but He was exalted on the cross. God

highly lifted Him up. It is a really interesting play on words.

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:15-16)

Remember the story of the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. In John 10:10, Jesus said, “The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy.” That is what the devil is like. Why did Jesus come? “I am come that they might have life and they might have it more abundantly.” “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
Wow—that we might have eternal life!

My sheep hear My voice. I know them. They follow Me. I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. God has given us eternal life. (John 10:27)

Look at 1 John 5, which the Jehovah’s Witnesses do not like because it mentions all three persons of the triune God in one verse. They point out that the manuscript evidence is against this.

This is he that came by water and blood, [even] Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. (1 John 5:6)

The Bible says the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Have you not ever asked how He does that? According to 1 John 5:6, you have your answer. Where in the Bible does it tell us that blood and water came out of the side of the Lord? In the Gospel of John 19. Keep your finger here and turn back to the Gospel. I hope you get blessed by this. You have to think with me for a moment.

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already,
they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear
pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
And he that saw [it] bare record, and his record is true: and he
knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things
were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him
shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall
look on him whom they pierced. (John 19:33-37)

Now in 1 John 5 it says that it is the Spirit that bears witness about the blood and water. How does the Spirit bear witness with your spirit, namely through the Bible's account? The same writer wrote both. John is saying, "I was there. I saw it. The Spirit is now bearing witness because the Spirit is truth."

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the
Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (1 John 5:7)

That is not in a lot of manuscripts. I do not have the time to prove it to you, but I believe it belongs in the text.

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (1 John 5:8)

It is talking about the death of Christ, and keep reading.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:9-13)

If you lack assurance that you have eternal life, it is because you have forgotten what Jesus did on the cross. Do not miss the point of this passage. You and I have eternal life because of what Jesus did when He died on the cross. All you have to do is review it again. For the Spirit will use the word that you review and bear witness with your spirit that you are indeed the child of God, because I believe the witness about Jesus Christ dying for my sins. Amen!

Let us pray.

Father, thank You for Your wonderful Word. I pray that You would continue to open up our hearts that we would see the glory of our Savior as He died for us. We remember what Paul wrote in Galatians, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” May it be so in every life. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Father, we know that in Your great wisdom and providence You allow things to happen in our lives that almost wipe us out. We can be so discouraged and defeated. It will seem like everything is all over. There is no hope, and in those dark times, we need the truth, because only the truth can set us free. You are a God who will forgive. You are the God who raised Jesus from the dead. He is alive and He is coming back. Help us, Lord, to understand that. Help us not to be depressed by the circumstances of life when we have a Savior, who has saved us out of all of this. Help us to look into His beautiful face, by faith seeing what we see in the word, knowing that one day, literally and physically, we are going to see His face as the Bible says. Thank You for our precious Lord Jesus—our resurrected, living Lord. We give You all the praise and all the glory. For it is in the name of our Messiah—our Lord Jesus Christ—that we pray. Amen.

We are on the resurrection. Now let us start with Matthew 28. There is of course, the resurrection in all four accounts of the Gospels. Let us go to Matthew 28. You will be receiving a number of notes that are not in your outline, and so you might want to get some space handy to jot things down as they come to your attention and your heart.

Matthew 28:1 says, “In the end of the Sabbath...” Stop right there. The Greek word is plural. “In the end of the Sabbaths,” which means that we have to have two Sabbaths in a row? Now the weekly Sabbath occurs every Saturday, but we have to have another Sabbath. Which Sabbath is it?

Go back to Leviticus 23:

These [are] the feasts of the LORD, [even] holy convocations,
which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. (Leviticus 23:4)

Whenever you see “holy convocations” or “holy meetings,” it is referring to the same thing as a Sabbath. That is, the requirements and the regulations for a Sabbath day apply to a holy convocation. It is holy, which means that day is separated from all other days of the week. We have a holy convocation. To prove this, look at verse 3, “Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work therein. It is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.”

We have some festivals that also are holy convocations.

In the fourteenth [day] of the first month at even [is] the LORD'S
passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month [is] the
feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must
eat unleavened bread. (Leviticus 23:5-6)

What time of day would the fifteenth day begin? At sundown. The Jewish day begins at sundown. Do not ever forget that or you will get messed up in the Gospels. On the fifteenth day, that would be sundown. The fourteenth day is when the Passover lamb is killed, according to Exodus 12, it has to be killed between the evenings. The fourteenth day starts on what in our time would be the thirteenth day, but it starts at evening. Now the next day, when it dawns, all day long, the

Passover lambs are killed. It was one lamb per ten people minimum and twenty people maximum. Josephus records in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, that on a Passover at the time of our Lord there were 256,000 lambs killed in one day. Using a little mathematics, you say, “How could they kill that many during the day when they have to do it before sundown? Well, it is very easy because all twenty-four courses of priests are on duty during the Passover. Normally they have a two week period they serve, twenty-four courses of them, but all of them, (thousands of them), are all in there killing lambs right and left. Can you hear the bleating of those animals? Can you see the blood being spattered everywhere? Can you see that the Passover was one of the most bloody sites you would ever see in your life? According to the Bible, there was a sweet aroma in the nostrils of God, for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

All the time that this was going on, 256,000 lambs were killed, which means that the population of Jerusalem is over 2 million. You say, How can that be when it normally is only about 300,000 or 400,000. Every Jewish male, 20 years old and above, must attend Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (Pesca, Shaviot, and Saccot). So Jerusalem’s population swells. We have over 2 million people, perhaps 3 million people, all over the place, living where ever they can and laying on the ground. All these lambs are killed on the fourteenth day when sundown starts the fifteenth day. You eat the Passover meal on the fifteenth day, and not the fourteenth day. That is where Christians get confused all the time. According to Exodus 12, you eat the meal before midnight. Remember, they ate it before they left Egypt. “Leave nothing of it until the morning.” The Passover meal is eaten after sundown on the fourteenth day. Sundown begins the fifteenth day, so the very fifteenth day. We are talking about the month of Nisan.

By the way, Chanukah which you are probably all getting ready to celebrate, is tomorrow. It goes for 8 days. Jesus went to a Chanukah, so you better be careful how much you laugh. It is the

Festival of Lights, and commemorates a great victory when the Maccabean family (under Judas Maccabbeus) liberated the temple from Antiochus Epiphanes (who had desecrated it and set up a god in the temple and even sacrificed a pig on the altar). They fought in the temple, literally, and they were trying to defend it, but they did not have much light. They wanted to fight all night and clean this out. It went on for eight days, and apparently the oil of the lamps in the temple were supernaturally was sustained for eight days. Oil would have normally lasted for one day, but the light stayed on for eight days while they cleaned house and finished the battle. Chanukah means “dedication.” They dedicated the temple again by cleansing and purifying it with anointing oil, and doing everything God told Moses and Aaron. They set it all up again, and it is a great story.

That is what Chanukah is all about, and Jesus went to Chanukah. It is called the Feast of Dedication in the Gospel of John. They usually have beautiful candelabra in the court of the women (also called the court of treasury), where you bring your gifts and tithes. They have giant candelabra and they would light them at the time of Chanukah. It is a Festival of Lights, commemorating the eight days when the light of the temple was sustained. Jesus, at the top of His voice, yelled out in the court of the women (the court of the treasury), according to John, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

There are many people who say that the reason we celebrate Christmas on December 25, is because in early church history, they were confused with Jewish festivals. The Chanukah day of celebration is the 25th of Kislev. Is everybody listening to me? “But the 25th of December,” a lot of people say, “is celebrating the sun god and all of that.” I prefer to believe that they got a little messed up on Jewish festivals, which we should have been celebrating all along.

Chanukah is the Festival of Lights. You always have eight branches on the Chanukah menorah, with a ninth one in the middle. Number nine stays lit the whole time to symbolize that the light was on the whole time. In your home, number nine stays lit all during Chanukah. Now at the first day of Chanukah, like tomorrow, we light number one. At the end of the day, you blow it out, but keep the central one lit. The next day we light one and two, then blow them out. The next day, one, two and three, and so forth all the way through the eight days.

Before you get excited about Christmas gift giving, you might think about how Jews handle this. We give gifts every single day of Chanukah. We start out with something very meager, and they get more expensive, so by the time the eighth day comes, the kids in the family can hardly wait to see what they are going to get. You start out by giving them a pencil, a pen, a dollar or under—, well, you know. The next day, maybe five or ten bucks. The next day maybe a twenty-dollar gift, until the last day—many Jewish people give cars on that day. I hate to tell you. “Did you get your car on Chanukah?” It is a wonderful celebration, a festival—the Festival of Lights—but it is not called a holy convocation. It is not a Sabbath. There are seven feasts of *Yahweh* that are called holy convocations, which act like Sabbaths. Now, let us look at the fifteenth day.

And on the fifteenth day of the same month [is] the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. (Leviticus 23:5-6)

Now we call that unleavened bread “matzo.” They are flat sheets that you use at Passover time. For seven days that is what you eat. You do not eat any good bread that has nice yeast in it. You eat this flat stuff for seven days, just like God said. I want to remind you all that our Lord Jesus is our unleavened bread. Leaven is a type of sin as the Lord Jesus Himself has said, “Beware of the

leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees.” 1 Corinthians 5 tells us to “keep the feast of unleavened bread, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, for Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.” So the whole thing is symbolizing our blessed Lord. The night of the Passover when Jesus broke bread, it was unleavened bread. It referred to His body that had no sin.

Do you know how unleavened bread (matzo) is made? There is a machine that rolls on it and so in sheet of matzo bread you will see stripes. We believe that the Lord intended it to be made that way, so that the wonderful promise of the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 53, could be fulfilled, “By His stripes we are healed.” Now also these things that roll on there, they also have little ends on them that perforate it (it makes little holes). If you hold a matzo sheet up to the light, the light will come through it. He was pierced also, for our sins. It is quite a powerful symbol to say the least. Not only at Passover, but the whole feast goes on seven days.

In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. (Leviticus 23:7-8)

Now, Matthew 28:1 says, “At the end of the sabbaths.” For a moment, let us suppose that Jesus died on Friday. Some people say it was Wednesday, and others say that it was Thursday. I happen to agree that it was Friday. I have had the other two views also, but I believe I was wrong. I have listened to my tapes and I disagree with myself. I now believe it was on Friday for a lot of reasons. First of all, if you get a Jewish calendar, you have a problem putting a Passover on

Wednesday and Thursday any time between AD 26 and 34, and so it is a little difficult. But in AD 29 everything fits.

Let us go to that day called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Jews offered what they call the *hagiga*, which is in fact, a peace offering. The Bible says that Christ is our Peace. He broke down the middle wall of partition. It was by the blood of His cross, Colossians 1:20 declares, that He made peace. He is our peace offering, and He settled the enmity (or hostility) between Jew and Gentile, and wrapped them both into one body through His cross. He died on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not on Passover. First of all, Jews who are in the temple sacrificing lambs are not going to be outside the city watching a crucifixion on the day of Passover. Those who have Him dying at that time, cannot also have Him eating the Passover meal. That is why they have Him eating a meal with the disciples that they say is not the Passover. I say that that is a bunch of hogwash. That is dumb. He ate the Passover with His disciples. That means they had to kill the lamb that day to have it at the meal. That means He died at the feast of unleavened bread, the first day. It is a Sabbath. Now if that is Friday, which I believe it was, then you have exactly what the Bible describes. At the end of the Sabbaths (plural), Friday and the normal one Saturday, is what it refers to. Sometime after Saturday night is when Jesus would have risen from the dead.

You say, “Wait a minute, I thought it was after three days and three nights.” No, what you are doing is using something He said about Jonah being in the belly of the whale three days and three nights. Forget that for just a moment. Every time Jesus or anyone else tells you what day Jesus arose from the dead, it always says on the third day. It never says after three days. It says on the third day. Now, what about that illustration? “As Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.” The number one problem you and I have with that is that we work on 24 hour, solar days. We do

not think like Jews do. A part of a day is a day to a Jew, and you have the same exact thing in the Book of Esther. After three days she was to come and meet the king, and he was supposed to put out the scepter to her, but the text actually says it was in the third day that she actually came. So, a part of a day can mean a day. He is in the grave before sundown on Friday. He is in the grave all day Saturday. He is in the grave a part of the day that begins on Saturday sundown, so sometime before dawn, we know that He is gone.

You will hear a lot of other views. Look back at Leviticus 23:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:9-11)

What day follows Saturday? Sunday. The Feast of First Fruits, in which you take a sample from the barley harvest and you wave it before the Lord. Let everybody see it. Well, it is going to be good, or you might say, it is a little thin this year or whatever. That celebration, that feast is always on Sunday.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15. It is always on Sunday, and has never been on any other day.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

This text definitely connects first fruits with the resurrection. Now the resurrection is celebrated on Sunday. Has anybody ever asked you, “Why do Christians worship on Sunday morning? Why do you not use Saturday like the Jews?” For a very important reason, “We are celebrating the resurrection of the Messiah.” It does not make it wrong to worship on the Sabbath, but the Sabbath is a sign of the Mosaic covenant. Exodus 31:12ff. tells us that it is only for the children of Israel. If a person comes up to me and says, “You know the Sabbath is the mark of the beast, if you do not have it, you are going to hell.” I say, “Excuse me, are you Jewish?” If they say, “No,” then I say, “What in the world are you celebrating the Sabbath for?”

If you are Jewish, you understand me. The Sabbath is an everlasting covenant between us and the Lord, and it deals with the covenant of Moses. It is a sign of that covenant, but it does not apply to Gentiles—only to the children of Israel.

Let us back up. Passover is on the fourteenth, which was on Thursday the week that Christ died, I believe. Does that connect with Jesus Christ? Absolutely. 1 Corinthians 5:7 says, “Purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new lump as ye are unleavened, for even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.” There it is just as clear as a bell.

The morrow after the Sabbath is the First Fruits.

And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat offering thereof [shall be] two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD [for] a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof [shall be] of wine, the fourth [part] of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: [it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. (Leviticus 23:12-16)

The Greek word Pentecost is talking about the fifty-day period. The Hebrew word is Shavuot. There are two reasons that we worship the Lord on Sunday. First, it is to celebrate the resurrection. Second, it is to celebrate the birthday of the church which began on the Day of Pentecost. Now what does the priest do on Pentecost?

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD. (Leviticus 23:17)

Why do we have leaven (or yeast) in these two loaves? Because it is not referring to Jesus, but to you. You have sin in your life. Why wave two loaves of bread on Shavuot? If you go down to your local bookstore and get the *Jewish Book of Why*, it has all these questions in it. There are two volumes, and I do recommend someday in your life, if you want to minister for the Lord the rest of your life, that you buy those two books. It is writing answers to the general public about why Jews do what they do. You look at Shavuot or Pentecost and say, “Why did the priest wave two loaves of bread? Why does the rabbi do that?” The answer is that we do not know. It is tradition.

I have mentioned this story before, but I will tell you again. I went out to eat with my Jewish rabbinical friend up the street. We went to Benji’s Restaurant. It is not Kosher, but it is Jewish. Anyway, we went there and it was lunch time. It was in the early summer, right before Shavuot (Pentecost). I like the way the rabbis do this. The line was out of the restaurant, about half a block long. It was so crowded as it always is during festival times. We are walking out of the car, and I am walking up with him. I walked right to the back of the line, but He grabbed my arm and said, “No, no, no. Come on. Come on.” I thought, “What’s he doing?” He walked up, and everybody said, “Oh rabbi, rabbi, rabbi.” He walked in through the door, and I am not lying. Half the restaurant picked up their dishes and food, and walked out of their booth and said, “Oh rabbi, please sit in my place.” “Please, sit here.” They gave up any place. He said, “Where do you want to sit?” I could not believe it. He sat down and said, “They do not treat you this way over there in your church do they?”

We were sitting at the table, eating our meal, and I said to him, “Hey rabbi, let me ask you a question.” He said, “What?” I said, “Why do you guys wave two loaves of bread on Shavuot? You’re going to do that this week? Now, why do you do that?” He said, “David, we don’t know. It’s tradition.” He kept eating. You have to understand this, this little Jewish pausing is very important. Anyway, we were pausing and I did not say anything, but kept eating. He puts down his fork, and looks at me, saying, “Don’t tell me. You think you know.” I said, “I have an idea.” And he said, “I thought you would.” He said, “Okay, what’s your idea?” I said, “I think... It’s just a thought.” I could see everybody in the booths of the restaurant. They were all like, “Wow, this is very interesting.” So I, of course, spoke louder and said, “When he waves those two loaves of bread with yeast in them, good bread, I think one represents the Jews and the other represents the Goyeb (the Gentiles).” The whole restaurant got absolutely, zero quiet. The rabbi looked at me and he said, “David, I’ll tell you what.” He said, “If the priests knew that one of those loaves represented the Gentiles, he would have thrown it on the floor.”

Now you see that is what happened on Pentecost. The Jews and Gentiles were brought into one loaf. We are one bread—one body in the Lord Jesus, because He is our peace. He has broken down the middle wall between us.

Why do we celebrate on Sunday? I do not care if you go to church on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, which I do all the time anyway. It does not matter to me in one sense, but I will tell you that I cannot stay home on Sunday mornings, where ever I am—even while on vacation. My wife says, “Hey, you’re on vacation. Why don’t you just miss once?” I cannot do it, because I am legalistic? Well, you judge. There is something in me that says, “I need to be there to celebrate.” I do not care it is a little handful of ten believers somewhere. We are going to go

over there and celebrate, because this is a time every Sunday morning to celebrate the birthday of the church, the great work of God, and to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So on a test, you have to have that down.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

Now, what we have established so far, hopefully, in your mind, is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of a Jewish festival in Leviticus 23, called the Festival of First Fruits, or the Feast of First Fruits. You should know that 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 teaches that Christ is our first fruits, speaking of His resurrection. I want you to understand that the Festival of First Fruits always comes on Sunday.

Now one more thing about Pentecost, it also always comes on Sunday. That is what the Bible says. Modern Judaism has changed this, so they will have Pentecost on other days of the week, because they count it from the time of Passover, and Passover varies as to what day it is. The Bible does not count it from Passover, but from First Fruits.

The Jews celebrating Pentecost on some day other than Sunday only started to happen in modern times. The reason is that they are counting it from Passover not from First Fruits, but the Bible counts it from First Fruits. There are a lot of things on this, but I want you to know I am more interested in what the Bible says, and not tradition. I want to learn what their tradition says, but I want to show why that is not so.

We are ready for Matthew 28. You think that we have had problems so far, but the fact is that we have a lot of difficulties on the accounts of the resurrection as well.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead [men]. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (Matthew 28:1-6)

The other day I was talking about the impact of the empty tomb, and some guy said to me, “Who cares, man? It doesn’t make any difference.” “Beg your pardon? The angel said to the woman, come see the place.” Apparently the place was very important to the argument.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by

the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him [away] while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:7-20)

We call this last section “the Great Commission.” It certainly is great, and it is certainly a commission. Jesus told us to do that, actually it was only one command, and that is “Teach all nations.” That is the only command in the Greek text. It is a Greek word, *mathetuo*, which means, “to disciple.” No one is to be left out. There are three verbal participles connected to that

command. They are not modifying a noun, but a verb (“teach”). When you ask me, “What does it mean to disciple all nations?” I would answer you with the words of Jesus. There are three participles here, “going,” “baptizing,” and “teaching.” The words, “Go ye therefore” that are often put there by people as commands from the Lord, is not commanded here, but it is commanded in Mark. Literally He says, “Having gone therefore.” The first work that Christ assumed is that we would go to people and tell them about Him. We do not wait for them to come to us. Having gone, therefore, we will also baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is the first act of obedience of a new convert. We will teach them to “Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” It is a very constant teaching ministry.

Now, that is what Matthew says, but go to Mark 16.

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. (Mark 16:1-2)

So we see that the other Mary in Matthew 28:1 is the mother of James. Salome is not mentioned in Matthew 28, and so some say that that is a contradiction, but she could have just been left out. Now, Matthew 28:1 says, “As it began to dawn,” but Mark 16:2 says, “At the rising of the sun.” Some people say, “Well, what’s half an hour or an hour among friends? Why argue about it?” Well, is it not possible that we have two visits here? We have those who came before the sun was up (Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, to see the sepulcher and there was one angel there). Is it not possible that a little later there was a second visit? Would you not have done this? “Salome, you

won't believe this." People say, "I don't know, because here they're bringing spices to anoint Him so they still think He's in the sepulcher, when the other story they believe He's gone." Now what are you going to do? You are looking at me, thinking, "You're the teacher. What, do you expect *us* to answer these problems?" Folks, I am telling you this is going to get worse. Do you know one of the major ways that liberal critics prove to you that the Bible cannot be trusted is by the resurrection stories?

There is a book called, *Life of Christ in Stereo*, by a man named Chaney Johnson. You can find it in Christian bookstores. I like this harmony of the Gospels a lot better than A. T. Robertson's, because he takes all four Gospels as one story and the only indication that you are reading from one of the Gospels is a numbering system that is above the words. Number one represents Matthew; two, Mark; three, Luke; and four, John. He puts it all together and tells the story. It is very beautifully done and the resurrection all fits. It is a very interesting way of doing it.

I personally think that Salome was probably just not mentioned. That is all. That is an easy editorial answer, but let us keep reading.

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the
stone from the door of the sepulchre? (Mark 16:3)

Now we have another problem. Go back to Matthew 28:2, the angel has already rolled back the stone. There was a great earthquake. Did it happen while the women were there asking who was going to roll away the stone? That is one possibility. The other possibility is that Mark 16 is talking about an earlier visit and then Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother James came back without Salome to see the sepulcher because He was already gone. That is a struggle for me. I

think it is better not to do that. “Who shall roll away the stone?” It is literally, “roll up.” They would go up an incline, and the stone was rolled down to lock in place in front of the door. And so it would have to be rolled up an incline to open the way.

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away:
for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a
young man sitting on the right side. (Mark 16:4-5)

Is that what you read in Matthew 28? It says, “He is sitting outside on the stone that rolled in front of the door.” Here it says, “He is sitting on the right side, inside of the sepulcher, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.”

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the

country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not. (Mark 16:6-14)

Now if you think this is tough, go to Luke 24. You say, “Can’t we just say Jesus arose from the dead and let us go?” One of our purposes in this school is to make sure you learn enough about the major doctrines of the Bible that you can give an answer for the reason that is in you—that you can answer these problems. If you have not already run into this, you will find that the cultists love to use this to undermine your Bible.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning,
they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices. (Luke 24:1)

Who came? Go back to Luke 23. It was the women, according to 23:55, which came from Galilee, and had followed after and beheld the sepulcher, how his body was laid. They were there before, then they returned and prepared spice and ointments and rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment. So now they are coming early in the morning, and they are bringing the spices that they prepared and certain others with them. Well, “women” is plural (verse 55), so there had to be at least two then. If you are bringing others that is plural (You had to bring at least two), but in the one story you have only two women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. In the other story you have three women, Mary Magdalene, the other Mary and Salome.

This must be why most preachers do not bother to tell you about this. These are difficult problems. Why not just tell the story and get on with it! No, these are problems. We have to deal with them. That is what you are here for. You are here to learn!

And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. (Luke 24:2-4)

This account does not mention the earthquake, or even that the angel of the Lord that came and rolled away the stone. It says that there are now two men, who are standing and not sitting. They are not sitting on the stone outside, and not sitting on the ledge inside. They are just standing there in shining garments. What do you think? Do you think that your head is hurting?

And as they were afraid, and bowed down [their] faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. (Luke 24:5-9)

Now, Mark said that they did not tell them, but now they are telling them. By the way, verse 10 is about to introduce someone new on the scene.

It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary [the mother] of James, and other [women that were] with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. (Luke 24:10-12)

There is no mention of John here. Then we have the story of the two on the way to Emmaus and them appearing to the eleven, telling them that the Lord is risen. He had also appeared to Simon, but we do not have any record of when that happened. Then Jesus stands in their midst and invites them to behold His hands and His feet. Let us now go to John.

The first [day] of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. (John 20:1)

Is the sun up or is it not? Is it beginning to dawn or is it not? Is it completely dark or is it not? Which is it? Do you see the problems? If you had this class in some liberal college or university, they would have you so messed up right now that you would not be able to see straight. Of course, I am messing you up too, because I have not answered any of it.

When Mary came to the tomb, she saw that the stone was taken away, which means that the angel of the Lord has already been there. This means we have already had the earthquake. Now, some

say that the earthquake probably woke everybody up. We do not have that far of a distance between the living quarters and the tomb, and so Mary Magdalene comes when it is dark, and she sees that the stone was taken away.

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. (John 20:2)

It says that she ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, which is probably John. It does not sound like she has been told that He is risen. You are now getting an answer to the problem. Watch it carefully.

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, [and looking in], saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie. (John 20:3-6)

I like that old fellow, Peter. He sticks his foot in his mouth, but you have got to like him. “What are you doing out here, John?” John is kneeling down and worshipping. Peter walks by, “Hey John, what’s going on.” He walks right in. I like Peter.

And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. (John 20:7)

That is a proof that something unusual had occurred. There is no way—even if somebody unwrapped it—that you would have that. You have got myrrh and aloes weighing a hundred pounds. This is gooey and sticky, and it is wrapped all the way around His head. How in the world was it all nicely folded. It was as though it had not been wrapped in the first place.

Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. (John 20:8-10)

Notice it did not say the “upper room” where He meets them the night of that same day. They went back home.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, [and looked] into the sepulcher. (John 20:11)

Now we find out that Mary was by herself. She came not when it was beginning to dawn, and not while the sun was up. The earthquake and the angel that rolled away the stone could have happened Saturday night—any time after sundown. Did the earthquake wake her? We do not know, but Mary came as it was still dark. She says, “Somebody has taken Him.” She thought that somebody had stolen Him. There is no angel telling her anything here. There is nothing. So she

tells Peter, and he and John come in there, then all of this happens. Mary stays at the sepulcher, crying.

And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. (John 20:12-16)

There was something about the way that He said it the second time, “Mary.” Notice in this passage that she did not say, “My name is Mary Magdalene. Now where did you take Him?” No. She said, “Where did you take Him?” When He first talked to her, He just said, “Woman.” You see, she would have known it had to be Him, because He knew her name without asking. “Mary,” he said. Then she turned herself, and saith unto him, “Rabboni,” which is to say, “Master.”

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend

unto my Father, and your Father; and [to] my God, and your
God. (John 20:17)

He was literally saying, “Stop clinging to me.” Now you know what Mary Magdalene did, she threw her arms around Him and hung on for dear life. She was so overwhelmed that she cannot believe it. Jesus’ response was, “Stop clinging to Me for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. (John 20:18)

The Bible tells us they did not believe her. That same day, at evening time, is when Jesus showed them who He was and breathed on them, saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.”

What is the answer to all this? I am going to give it a little shot. You see what you think. It is still dark, and is some time on Saturday night or very early Sunday morning (somewhere around 1 a.m. to 2 a.m.). There was a huge earthquake, and the angel of the Lord came and rolled back the stone. Mary Magdalene, was probably still thinking about all the events as her heart was still broken. Remember the Bible says at the cross were the women who followed Him, including Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils. They stood at the cross watching Him there. She stood and watched Him there. Remember, my dear students, that the women wrapped His precious body with all those grave clothes and all those ointments. What if you were there? This is the Son of God, claiming to be the Messiah, casting demons out of you, telling you that your sins are forgiven, and He is lying there dead. You are washing His body.

People say, “It couldn’t have been Friday. It couldn’t have been even that day. I mean, what are you going to do? A guy dies, you immediately bury Him?” But that is what Jews do. Did you not know that? Jews bury a person immediately. They do not wait another day. They do not have a slumber room where they would sit around and look at a dead body. They do not do that, but they bury them immediately on the same day.

Can you imagine being Mary Magdalene as she was wrapping that whole body of Jesus? Imagine the thoughts that would be going through your mind: “What has happened here?” Do you think those women might have said to one another as they were doing this and crying their blooming heads off, “You remember what He did say, don’t you? He did say that He would be crucified. And He did say that He would rise again the third day.” I just happen to believe that Mary Magdalene had a heart for God all the way. She loved her Lord, and remembered what He said. She could hardly sleep on that third day. I do not need the earthquake to justify the waking of Mary Magdalene—human nature is enough. Mary Magdalene was contemplating about it all and thinking, “You know, it is what one o’clock.” She had no watch, but, “What is it? I gotta go. I gotta go. I can’t stand it.” Then she goes by herself to the sepulcher, and He is gone. She then cries her blooming head off and runs back to get the other women.

We also have the appearances of these angels, sitting on either side of Mary. That is an absolutely beautiful thing. These guys are floating in and out, and it was the angel of the Lord, just one angel, who rolled away the stone. We are also told that two men were standing there in white apparel. This is presumably the two angels. Now what if they are not?

Turn to Acts 1:9. Is everybody having fun? I sure am. This is the ascension, which was forty days after the resurrection. Remember, it says in Acts 1:3, “To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days.” We know that they were in the upper room for ten days. He is going to ascend into heaven on the fortieth day, and Pentecost was another ten days after that.

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (Acts 1:9)

Now some of us have the idea that He was standing there and saying, “Guys it’s time. I gotta go,” then all of a sudden He is gone. Now the Greek does not indicate that. There are two things here that are notable. First, when it says that they were looking steadfastly toward heaven, it uses the root of our English word “theater,” which means to gaze a long time at something. It is as if you are watching a movie, and so they were watching Him ascend for a long time. It was not a quick glance. Also, when He was taken up, He was ascending slowly into heaven while they were watching.

And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:10)

There were two men in white apparel as Luke writes. Now they keep showing up in scriptures at interesting places. Turn to Matthew 17.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (Matthew 17:1-5)

Peter is out of his tree! He says, “Lord, it is so good to be here. Let’s make three tabernacles, one for You, one for Moses, one for Elijah.” No, there is no vacancy in the trinity. We are not going to be doing that. A voice comes out of heaven and says, “No, no, no. It’s not Moses. It’s not Elijah. This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear you Him” (My translation).

And when the disciples heard [it], they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. (Matthew 17:6-8)

They saw no man, save Jesus only. Now I have two men appearing on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they are Moses and Elijah. I have two men appearing also at the Resurrection. I have two men appearing also at the ascension.

Now, Revelation 11:3-6 shows that, apparently, they have been involved before.

And I will give [power] unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred [and] threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. (Revelation 11:3-6)

The two olive trees and candlesticks standing before the God of all the earth is found in Zechariah 4. The fact that fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies is interesting because Elijah did that. Elijah also had power to shut heaven that it rain not. Moses had power over waters to turn them to blood. Moses was also there when God had smitten the earth (or Egypt) with plagues.

These two men could be Moses and Elijah all along. They were there at the Resurrection. They were there at the Ascension. Well, what about the angels? The angels are always around too,

because the psalmist wrote in Psalm 91 that God will give His angels charge over Him (the Messiah), lest He dash His foot against a stone. The angels were always around Jesus.

Look at John 20. Let us find out what happened that night when He shows up to these disciples. I know that the specific answers we sometimes look for are not always forthcoming, but I suggest to you that the answer to the problem of what happened at the tomb is only answered—believe it or not—by examining with more careful detail than normal. A careless look at details will get you confused. A careful look at details will answer your questions. I believe the whole thing is answered by only one thing. That Mary Magdalene came to the sepulcher by herself while it was dark and there was no one there. That is not when the angel said, “He is not here. He is risen,” because she still did not know where He was. Jesus is the one that appeared to her, and I think that that is the answer.

Now turn back to John 20.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week,
when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for
fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith
unto them, Peace be unto you. (John 20:19)

Remind yourself that the women have already told them that He is alive. Mary told Peter, “I saw Him. I put my arms around Him. He told me to stop hanging on to Him.”

“Mary, what did you have for dinner?”

“I’m telling you, I saw Him.” “Are you on something, Mary?”

These guys would not believe the reports. Now remember, according to Mark 16:14, that Jesus (when He first talked to them after giving them the greeting, “Peace be unto you, shalom”) rebuked them for their hardness of heart and unbelief. They would not believe the report of the women. “Oh ye of little faith.” A lot of us do not believe the report of the word of God either. You say, “If I saw somebody come back from the dead, I’d believe.” No, Jesus said in Luke 16 (the story of the rich man and Lazarus), that even if one did come back from the dead they will not believe because they do not believe Moses and the prophets.

And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. (John 20:20)

You cannot believe how the cultist (these guys who wear white shirts and long ties, riding bicycles) will tell you at the door that it was only a hallucination. It was not a literal body. It was only an appearance. They say that the Bible does not say that the disciples touched Him.

Turn to 1 John 1:1. The same guy wrote this that wrote the Gospel of John. Let us see whether they touched Him or not. I know if I were there, I would have. If you thought it was a ghost, would you not explore it a little bit?

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. (1 John 1:1)

The life was manifested, and we have seen it. They are talking about Jesus. So the disciples do touch Him. Go back to John 20.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father
hath sent me, even so send I you. (John 20:21)

Luke 19:10 says, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Our main mission is to seek lost people.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye
the Holy Ghost. (John 20:22)

I have a lot of commentaries on John and a lot of tapes by different guys. I decided to check it out. Do you know the majority of commentators do not believe that they received the Holy Spirit this night? They think Jesus was just predicting it, and that it is really referring to what would happen to them fifty days later at Pentecost. I was astonished because these are good Bible teachers that are currently on the radio. Now let us look at it again. “He breathed on them.” Listen, if Jesus breathes on you, you have something. Do you understand me? If Benny Hinn breathes on you, I am not sure about that. But if Jesus breathes on you, you have got it. What proof do I have? Job said the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. Human life was created by the breath of the Lord. God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. The heavens were created by the breath of God. The word of God itself, brought them into existence out of nothing. “All things,” it says of Jesus, “were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made.” All things were created by Him, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers—no matter what they are (Colossians 1:16-17). He is the

creator of everything. Do you understand that when He breathed, He breathed the entire physical and material universe into existence. I like to say that He probably just sneezed and there were the stars. When He breathed, it was there. When He said, let there be light, there was light diffused in the whole system at once. He did not need to wait for it to travel 186,000 miles a second and arrive at a planet that somehow got here ahead of time.

I just received a thick packet of materials from the most scholarly academic organization on science, creation, and evolution in the United States. They control the curriculum of our schools. The head of that organization was driving in his car in the Bay area and heard what I was saying on Genesis. He sent me a whole stack of stuff on why Genesis is wrong and evolution is right. On why we have no business teaching Creation in the schools because it is a religious theory. He says that Creation has nothing to do with fact, and so he sent me all this stuff. You know, as I read through that material, I noticed something. On almost everything they wanted to say that was contradicting the Bible, it was all theory. I then took a highlighter and highlighted all those little statements. “We suppose this happened...” “We think this might be what we...” Now, these were all guesses. They had no facts at all in the entire paper. I just highlighted them all, then wrote at the bottom, “In the beginning God. Case closed!”

People argue that when He, who created everything even human life, breathed on the disciples they did not get something. Now what did He say that they received? He said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.”

The receiving of the Holy Spirit is not talking here about gifts or tongues or any of that. It is not talking about the baptism of the Spirit either. The words, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit,” are talking about salvation.

Romans 8:9 says that if you have not received the Spirit, you are none of His. You do not belong to Christ. We are talking about being born again. If you find this on a test, you had better get it right. John 20:22 is talking about regeneration, not baptism. They were saved—born again—that night. They received the Holy Spirit! Your body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God. You are not your own. You are bought with a price. That night all those disciples who did not believe in Him, who all forsook Him at the cross, received the Holy Spirit and were saved.

Why is this so important? Now we have got to explain what happened fifty days later when they were baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit when they already had the Holy Spirit.

There are a lot of whackos out there that are trying to say that we believe something which we do not believe. What we believe is that disciples were regenerated when they received the Spirit on the night of the Resurrection. This means that something else happened on the Day of Pentecost. They were baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. We believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit with power, is something other than regeneration (being born again). Do you understand me?

People are scared to death of believing that the disciples got saved that night, because then they have to explain what happened on the Day of Pentecost, and we would not want to do that because you might get really flaky and start rolling in the aisles, jumping all over the place, and barking like dogs. No, none of that, but do you understand how critically important that is? You will need to know that.

Let us pray.

Father, thank You for Your wonderful word, and how excited we are to know that Jesus is alive and not dead. As we continue to study this, God, I pray that You would strengthen us so that we would know this major doctrinal point of salvation. We have to believe that God raised Him from the dead if we are going to be saved. Open up our hearts and minds. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank You for Jesus Christ, our Savior, that He is not dead, but that He is alive.

One day He is going to come back. He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Thank You, Lord. We pray that the truth of the resurrection might be deeply implanted in our hearts. We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

In our last time together we talked a little bit about the events of that final week leading to the resurrection and dealt with Matthew 28. Now, in your Bibles turn to 1 Corinthians 15. Those of you who are listening and writing and able to think at the same time will want to know what is on the board up here. We will not get to it until the second hour this morning, but I will want you to know what happened that first day in terms of the appearances of Jesus Christ. There are five according to the Bible. If there are any more, they just are not mentioned.

As you know, 1 Corinthians 15 is called the Resurrection Chapter. If you are interested in really studying this chapter (I do not know if you are or if you are not. Maybe someday in the future, but you can make a little note on your notes anyways), there is a whole book on this one chapter, by Spiros Zodhiates. You are not responsible for this, of course, but I leave it for your mutual benefit. It is a great volume—one whole, huge, thick book on 1 Corinthians 15 by Spiros Zodhiates, which deals with the text phrase by phrase. It is an excellent study of this chapter, which will hopefully answer most of your questions. Let us take a look at the text.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Not only did Jesus predict that He would rise on the third day (not after three days), but so do all the New Testament writers confirm that He rose on the third day. Any part of a day, makes a Jewish day.

Do you have to believe that Jesus rose from the dead in order to be a Christian? We mentioned it last time from Romans 10:9-10: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” You must believe that Jesus arose from the dead in order to be a true Christian. Here again is confirmation of that. Paul says, “Here is the gospel. Christ died for our sins. He was buried and He rose again.”

Allow me to touch on a sideline for a second. The gospel is not simply that Christ died. The gospel is that Christ died for our sins. It is not just His death, but the purpose of His death that we believe.

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

(1 Corinthians 15:5)

Cephas is the Aramaic name of Peter, who was of the twelve. This verse is referring to the first appearances of our Lord that very first day—that Sunday.

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;
of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are
fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:6)

Now, 1 Corinthians, was written about AD 51 or 52, which would put it about 20 years after the Resurrection. Obviously there were people still living who were there. They were eyewitnesses, but some of them have fallen asleep (i.e., died).

After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And
last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.
For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called
an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the
grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which [was
bestowed] upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more
abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which
was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach,
and so ye believed. (1 Corinthians 15:7-11)

Now, you know when I read this today I thought, “This sounds like Pastor Chuck.” Do you want a little tip to know how his sermons are organized? Listen for the word “now.” When he says, “Now,” it means that he is moving to the next point. Here Paul does the same thing:

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.

(1 Corinthians 15:12-13)

Remember that the word “Christ” (*Christos*, the anointed one) all the way through here is the word for “Messiah.” The very fact of the Messiah rising from the dead has been a part of Jewish rabbinical tradition. Although many rabbis today deny it, the evidence of this is overwhelming. Even in the orthodox Hassidic branch, you will find no disagreement. It is so strong that even the Lubivitzers, who are having a field day today, are more popular today than ever. They are Hassidic Jews, with whom I lived with for about eight years. These Hassidic Jews believe that Rabbi Snearson, who died a year and a half ago, was the Messiah. He never went to Israel. He lived in Brooklyn, New York, and died in his nineties. He claimed to be able to do miracles. People would line up in long lines outside of his residence to have him appear and to touch them and pray for them. It was very interesting. They believe that he is going to rise from the dead because they believe that the Bible teaches that the Messiah must rise from the dead. They are actually building him a lovely home in Israel, so that he will have a place to stay when he rises from the dead. You may think that is strange, and it certainly is, but I say on this point is that it proves that among Orthodox Jews there is still the belief that Messiah must be resurrected from the dead.

Where do they get that? That is the issue. I have heard people say, rather naively, “Nowhere in the Bible does it say that.” Oh yes, it does. As a matter of fact, it was the basis of Peter’s first sermon that began the church of Jesus Christ. The church of Jesus Christ was built on the

resurrection. The resurrection was the theme of apostolic preaching. “Christ is not dead!” “He is alive.” “He rose again from the dead.”

Now, we are digressing a moment off of 1 Corinthians 15. Let us see if you know this. I would advise you to really know it. Amen? That is called a gentle clue that you might see it again.

Put your finger in Psalm 16, and another finger in Acts 2. Now Peter began his message from the Book of Joel, talking about Armageddon and the salvation of Israel. Then he goes on and discusses the death of Christ. After telling them by wicked hands He was crucified and slain, Peter said:

Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death:
because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For
David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always
before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be
moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad;
moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not
leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to
see corruption. (Acts 20:24-27)

The Greek word used here for “hell” is *hades*. In the Old Testament the word for grave is *sheol*. If you translated it into Greek, the word is *hades*, meaning “unseen,” or “the place of the unseen.” *Hades* is translated “hell” in the New Testament. It could also be translated “grave,” or “the place of the departed.” We have another word for hell also, *Gehenna*, which probably refers the final hell, the lake of fire.

You say, “Wait a minute. Why would he go to hell?” Well, that is one of the problems there because if you do not know that *hades* translates *sheol*, you will make a mistake. He is talking about David dying, and his body going to the grave (*sheol*, or *hades*), and that he is in a place of the departed. According to Jesus, we have a clarification of this. Both righteous and wicked in the Old Testament, when they die, go to the same place. One event happens to all. There is one place for all according to Ecclesiastes. All wicked and righteous go to the same place, *sheol*, meaning, “grave,” or *hades*, meaning “the place of the unseen”—we cannot see it.

Now in Luke 16, Jesus said that in *hades* (*sheol* in Hebrew) there was a division made between the righteous and the wicked. There was a great gulf fixed between the two, so that you cannot pass over from one side to the other, but you could communicate, interestingly. Those who were on the side of the wicked were in torment and in pain, according to what Jesus said. Those who were on the side of the righteous were in Abraham’s bosom and had much blessing. The story of rich man and Lazarus is a great one. Some of us believe that when Jesus died, between the time of His death and resurrection (those two and half days or so), He descended into the lower parts of the earth, namely *hades*, or *sheol*. He proclaimed the gospel of judgment to those who had refused to believe in the Messiah. One text that speaks of this is 1 Peter 3:18-20. Another is, “He took captive a host of captives” (Ephesians 4:8-10). He took captive a host of captives, namely Old Testament saints and took them to heaven. Now in the New Testament, everybody in *hades* is wicked. There are no righteous there. When a believer dies now, he is absent from the body and present with the Lord. Hebrews 12:22 tells us that he joins the Old Testament saints as well who are in heaven, Mount Zion, heavenly Jerusalem, the City of our God. It is very interesting, class. Before the cross, believer and unbeliever alike go to *sheol*. There, is a great gulf fixed between the two. Between the death of Christ and the resurrection, He descends into that area, and

preaches a gospel of judgment to those who had rejected the Messiah. As they will see for the first time that it was real. Messiah will be there and will take captive all the Old Testament saints to lead them up on high, as the Bible says. Now, all believers who die are immediately present with the Lord with regard to their soul. Their body, on the other hand, goes to the grave.

There is another view on this. I do not often tell you many views held by liberals or non-believers, because I do not really care about them, but Bible teachers do disagree about this. The other view is that the phrase, “He descended to the lower parts of the earth,” is just referring to His leaving the glory of heaven and becoming a man, coming to earth. When it says, “taking a host of captives captive,” the captives in this view are sin, death, and hell. That is referring to His cross, and then His ascension. “He ascended up on high.” They do not believe that He went down to the grave, as it were, or to the place of *hades*. I do not think that the second view answers all the questions. The first view is more correct, in my opinion.

Now, I say all of that to help us understand Psalm 16. David said, “I will not leave my soul in hades. Neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One....” He is not talking about himself, but about the Messiah, the Holy One. “You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption.” Corruption is set into the physical body on the fourth day, and so that is why it is very important to believe what the Bible teaches. Jesus arose from the dead on the third day. A Jew will tell you that if He rose on the fourth day (after three days were over), then He violates the promise of God concerning the resurrection of the Messiah. You have got to watch these Jewish rabbis, because they are constantly looking for a way to tear down the Christian message. It is true that Jesus said, “As Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the belly of the earth three days and three nights,” but it does not really say, “Three days and three nights at the end of it.” It just says, “So shall He be in the belly of the earth,” which is a Jewish

idiom. It is used in the Book of Esther and we know that Esther was told that she could come and appear before Ahasuerus after three days and three nights. Now, the actual text says that it was on the third day when she came, because any part of a day and any part of a night is a Jewish day or night.

It is important to understand that you cannot have Him being resurrected after three days and three nights because it violates the promise of God that the body of the resurrected Messiah would not see corruption (which occurs on the fourth day).

Peter said, “The Holy One will not see corruption.” Then he finished Psalm 16: “Thou hast made known to me the ways of life. Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.”

Men [and] brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. (Acts 2:29)

I was just at his sepulcher about three or four weeks ago. It is right near the Upper Room on Mount Zion. The Temple complex is just to the east (not too many feet away). His tomb is still there; his sepulcher is still there. Therefore, the passage cannot mean that David is some sort of holy one, because his body saw corruption.

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. (Acts 2:30)

What promise is that? Psalm 132:11, says, “Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.”

He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. (Acts 2:31-32)

This is a powerful thing when you look at the resurrection. We do not have Christianity without the resurrection. All those guys (who come with white shirts and long ties and riding bicycles) that try to tell you that it was just an apparition, or just an appearance, and that Christ lives on in our hearts, are speaking baloney. Now it is true that Christ lives in our hearts by our faith in Him and all of that. It is a spiritual presence, but the truth is that He rose again from the dead in His physical body. “This same Jesus who was taken up from you shall so come again in like manner as you have seen Him go.” It is heresy to deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that heresy is throughout mainline denominations today.

A study not too long ago done by *Redbook Magazine* noted that only 11% of preachers in mainline denominations believe that the resurrection was a literal body resurrection. Most of them said that the resurrection is when He comes into our hearts. Well, I am afraid they are wrong. Is everybody clear on this?

Back to 1 Corinthians 15.

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?
(1 Corinthians 15:12)

Do you know what Jews were in that category? The Sadducees.

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then [is] our preaching vain, and your faith [is] also vain. (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

The faith would be empty. This is an interesting point, and maybe you need to make a note to yourself or underline it. If Jesus Christ, our blessed Messiah, never rose from the dead then our preaching is totally empty. A lot of empty-headed preaching is going on around this country. If you do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, your preaching is a colossal waste of time. I told that to one gentleman who was listening to a liberal preacher who did not believe in the bodily resurrection.

It says that our faith is also vain if Christ was not raised. Do you understand that you cannot be a true genuine believer and not believe that Jesus arose from the dead? Your faith is empty. There is nothing there.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye

are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. (1 Corinthians 15:15-18)

It would have been a pipe dream for all the believers in the Lord Jesus, if He did not come back from the dead.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (1 Corinthians 15:19)

I read this one day and realized that probably ninety-five percent of Christendom around the world is right in that verse. If their only hope is in this life, then it is a sad thing. Oh how the Lord can help you in this life. I was talking to a gentleman who was really blowing it most of the time. He had a lot of addiction problems—all kinds of stuff. The guy really knows the Lord, but he is just having a hard time. Sometimes life can be a bummer as we try to live for the Lord. There might be all kinds of problems hitting you from all different sides. It is great to know that the hope we have is not in this life. You have to stop and think about the application of that. I remember telling him one day, “You know if the Rapture happens in the next five minutes, your conversation is rather boring.” He started laughing and I laughed with him. It is easy to let your present problems dominate your mind and to forget what it is that we have come to believe as the true gospel of Jesus Christ, that the true gospel is dealing with the future, and not now.

We know that the Lord helps us to get through life. He gives us wonderful resources: His word and the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the way people are talking, you would think that their hope is in this life and not the one that is beyond the grave. The older you get the more you think about life beyond the grave.

It occurred to me that I have lived longer than the average life span in this country in 1900. I am getting to be an old dude. Let me just say 50 was a good year—I remember it well. I was alive at Pearl Harbor, and that should tell you something.

Circle, underline, or write in your notes never to forget 1 Corinthians 15:20.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits
of them that slept. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

I love the phrase, “But now....” It appears so many times in the New Testament epistles. It is a favorite tool of the apostle Paul. He talks about something very dismal and then all of a sudden, “But now.” “But now is Messiah risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.”

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection
of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be
made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the
firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then
cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to
God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and
all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all
enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is
death. (1 Corinthians 15:21-26)

After the millennium no one will ever die again.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. (1 Corinthians 15:27)

The Jehovah Witnesses use this passage to teach Christ's subordination to the Father, which is true in His earthly ministry. This particular text is teaching that in His exaltation and glory He is excepted. He is the exception to everything being submitted to the father, which means that He must be equal to the Father otherwise you could not read it that way.

There are seven reasons to believe. You could probably bring a lot more out of this, and there are a lot of sub-points that we will look at. Let us start with the authority of the Bible. There is no other place to start. Concerning the authority of the Bible, there are two things that I want you to know. It is based on two things: on sound evidence (not on hearsay or fairy tales), and on many eyewitnesses.

There is a famous case in British legal history. The details of this are in Josh McDowell's book if you are interested in pursuing it. Lord Lindhurst said, "I know pretty well what evidence is, and I tell you such evidence as that for the Resurrection has never broken down yet." It is based on sound evidence. Christians are not afraid to deal with it. It is the main issue of Christianity.

Now in the early church, Christians were being killed, as you probably know, and persecuted heavily. The persecution started pretty early, even with Saul persecuting the church. It got heavy during the Roman Empire. There were, what we call, ten general persecutions of Christians. The

first one happened under Nero in the AD sixties. Nero actually burned Rome in AD 64 and blamed it on the Christians. An empire-wide purging of Christians had begun by Nero, who used to light living Christians on fire in order to make light for the orgies in his gardens. He loved to hear their screaming and yelling as they burned to death. He was a wicked man. One of his officers in the area that we know of as Turkey today, a man named Pliny, wrote a letter to Nero, in which he said, “For every one of these Christians we kill, there are ten to take their place.” That is why Tertullian, the great church leader, about AD 200, wrote, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

Now Jesus said to Peter at Caesarea Philippi, “Thou art Peter, but upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hades will not overtake it (or prevail against it).” Now there are two views of that passage. The first view is that the Christians are on the attack knocking down the door of hell. “Watch out devil, we are going to get you,” the evangelist screams. I suggest that you do not accept that view if I were you. Michael the archangel, who has a lot more power than you, did not take the devil on, but said, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan.” You had better leave that in the hands of the Lord. Do not to take on Satan. You need the armor of God to defend yourself against all of Satan’s strategies, wiles, and temptations. I believe that the first view is incorrect. The gates of hades does not mean that the church should bombard hades to overtake hell, even though that is preached by thousands of preachers. This view is totally wrong. What is the gateway into hades? What is the door way that leads into hell? Death. We know that in Revelation. Remember the two riders, death and hades following. The second death is explained in that they will cast all these people into the lake of fire. There are a lot of interesting things. Now, both death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. Death is the doorway into hades. Look at the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16.

The point of it is that death will not overtake or prevail against the church, because the true church is being assembled in heaven (Hebrews 12:22). There is a church in heaven. All those believers who have died are already up there. That is where the big praise gathering is taking place—the one to which we cannot wait to go. Down here we just have churches, local ones with lots of trouble. Churches have more trouble than you can shake a stick at. They can get into anger and bitterness and resentment of one another. They can tear each other apart. If it was not for the grace of God, we would probably kill each other every Sunday. The true church is in heaven; the universal body of Christ is not on earth, but in heaven. There are only local churches on earth and let us hope that they are composed of members who are in the true church.

When we die, now we are really doing church! This is so important to understand in your theology, application, and the way you think about things. This is very important to understand that death for Christians does not overtake the church. It does not destroy it. It does not wipe it out. That was a wonderful promise, because of the Resurrection.

The Resurrection is the crucial issue of it all—of everything that we believe. It is not damaging for a Christian to hear somebody attack the Resurrection. We would love to have them investigate it. We are not afraid of somebody investigating the Resurrection at all. There is more evidence of the Resurrection than any other fact in history prior to the printing press. Of course, after the printing press you can reduplicate pages, of course, but clear until AD 1450, the Resurrection of Jesus has more written historical matters related to it than anything else. We are not afraid of evidence, because the evidence is everywhere.

We are going to talk about some of that, but one of the most important things are eyewitnesses.

How many witnesses does it take to validate the truthfulness of something that was seen or heard?

Two or three. Now, notice in our courtrooms today, they always want to know whether the person actually saw it. Did you see that? Did you hear that? An eyewitness in court, has to actually have been there and not heard it through somebody else. They cannot report what somebody else told them, which is what all the accusations against Jesus were at the trial. They were all being reported, but who was actually there to hear and see it? We have a number of eyewitnesses.

Let us look at Luke 1:1-4, and then we will give you a little break. Talk about eyewitnesses, Luke says that his whole account is based on it.

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, [in chronological order] most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4)

How do you prove to somebody the certainty of a past event in which they were not present?

Have you ever studied this in history? There is only one way to establish the validity of a historical fact when you were not present, and that is through eyewitnesses.

That is the problem that we have in our court trials today. A hundred years from now, people will be looking back, and will only look to eyewitnesses to determine the truthfulness of something

said or done. You see, when you come to the matter of the Resurrection, we do not need to put our head in the sand or crawl through the door and act very sheepishly like we are just whistling in the dark here—just believing, and hoping it is true. No, Christianity is built on sound evidence. It is built on eyewitnesses, of which there are plenty.

Now, nineteen-hundred years removed, we have to figure out whether we are going to believe the eyewitnesses. Do you know that there are fewer eyewitnesses to the life of George Washington than there are to Jesus Christ? Do not tell me you are really going to believe that there was somebody named George? What gives you the idea that he was the president of our country? You read it in some book? Where did *they* get it? The same tactics that critics use with the Bible could be used with anything. For sake of the argument, let us say that the Bible is not the word of God. Let us say that it is just a book from history. We have to establish that the historicity of it is reliable and authentic? How do you establish that? How do you establish that in any book in this world? The answer is you take the dates, names, places and events and figure out if there is any supporting evidence to it, from the time period being described.

For instance, we know that Herodotus, the great Greek historian, has a lot of exaggerations in his book. We know that many ancient books lied, because they wanted to be more important than their previous ancestors. We have to do what everybody is required to do with information pertaining to a time prior than their own. We did not see it. We are being told about it by somebody's book. Who are the eyewitnesses behind the places, dates, and names, of the event?

I do not know if you have really gotten this in your head or not, but this is very serious with me. I have debated this on college campuses for many years. It bothers me at how loose we are now. We are much more loose in our commitment to the evidence behind the Bible today than we ever

have been in the past. I do not know why this is the case. It is like if anything is cerebral it must not be from God, as if we use our heads and think, “That must be carnal, but to let your heart run wild, that must be spiritual.” Please, get a hold of yourself. We renew our minds daily in the word of God. God never asks you to check your brains off at the door. He wants you to think. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Do not ever stop thinking and questioning and asking. I think it is very important. If you have any doubts or questions in your mind, ask them. There are legitimate questions that we have concerning a lot of things about which we need to think and keep asking. When it comes to the Bible, we have nothing to be afraid of.

I want you to know that if I found out that the Philistines never existed and the Bible made it up, I would have a very serious problem with everything I believe. You see, a lot of Christians say, “Oh that doesn’t really matter. If you just believe in Jesus with all your heart....” Well I can believe in Buddha with all my heart. What are you trying to say? Look folks, it is either true or it is not true. Do you really believe? Believing is not just becoming emotionally committed. There are a whole bunch of Christians that look like they are really cool. But is it true or not? If it is true and it is genuine, upon what credible basis do you believe this?

Understand that almost every cult and every religious deviation is questioning one thing: the authority of the Bible. Let them do it, my Bible still stands. I am not afraid of any of it (e.g., the dates, names, and places). All of this confirms the Bible’s validity over and over again.

I remember when they used to laugh, in my time, about an ancient fortress called Hazor that was burned with fire. They did not know where it was. They could not find it. We visit it now, and it is a monstrous fortress area like Megiddo itself. The evidence proved that it was burned, exactly

as the Bible states. This goes on and on and on. Do not fear anything about the Bible. The Bible is the most authentic, historically accurate, and reliable document in all of ancient history. Nothing is comparable to it. Do not let anybody delude you to think differently. If you want to challenge it, then challenge anything you want in it. Any place. Any name. Any king. Any empire. Any location.

Do you know the Bible is the only accurate map book from the ancient world? There are many people who work with maps and love to study the ancient maps and different things that people have drawn. Let me tell you something. These people are amazed at the Bible's accuracy. They do not understand it. How could anyone be so precise about boundaries, borders, lakes, seas, and rivers? How can it be? It is very possibly the word of God. You know that is one possibility that you are going to have to keep out there.

What is the first reason to believe that Jesus rose from the dead? The authority of the Bible, and do not forget it.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

The second line of evidence for belief in the Resurrection has been and still is the absence of the body of Jesus from a closely guarded tomb. Be careful here. I am going to talk about this on the next page, but this point does not at all need to prove which tomb it is. It is just whatever tomb the Bible is talking about—wherever it is located.

I have noticed how many Christians get messed up right here. They miss the point. They want to argue about which tomb, but that is not necessary. The second line of evidence is in the Bible; it is the absence of the body of Jesus from the closely guarded tomb—wherever it was. Let me show you what I mean.

Go to Matthew 27. By the way, this is still a powerful way to present the gospel to somebody who does not believe in the Resurrection—if they are willing to listen. A lot of people do not want to listen. Jesus says, “He who wills to do My will, will know of the doctrine.” A lot of us are not willing. We put people on or argue with them or whatever. When you find somebody who is really open and interested, then use these arguments. I have done it many times.

First, it was shocking to the Romans. It was quite an embarrassment to them. Is it not quite obvious that they could not produce the body? If you wanted to kill Christianity, it would be the simplest way. After all, they were in charge of protecting it. The absence of the body from a closely guarded tomb is evidence of the Resurrection.

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make

it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure,
sealing the stone, and setting a watch. (Matthew 27:62-66)

If anyone were to break that seal, by the way, under Roman law, it is the immediate death penalty. Any soldiers under whose command the seal was broken are also executed. This will help you to explain something.

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. (Matthew 28:11-13)

It is interesting that this is the same thing that is being said today by scholars that disciples stole the body. It is a very simple answer. Hugh Schonfield wrote *The Passover Plot* in the fifties, in which he said that Jesus faked it. Jesus swooned on the cross and acted like He was dead. Then the disciples stole the body and He never rose from the dead. It is even a big long book. Well, anybody that knows the Roman watch, the Roman guard, and the condition of the disciples, knows that Schonfield's view is absolutely stupid. It almost does not deserve an answer if you are that ignorant. It is impossible that the disciples stole the body. It is totally impossible.

Do you think that eleven guys, minus Judas, who all forsook Jesus at the cross, would, a couple of days later, become super-heroes, or Mighty Power Rangers able to overcome four Roman

soldiers at a watch. Remember, these men were capable of defending a hundred foot square against one hundred men? No, I do not think so.

As a matter of fact, I do not believe that eleven men, even if they were pretty strong, could have pushed the stone up away from the door, because when Mark tells us the stone was rolled away, he uses a Greek word which means “rolled up.” If you know anything about first century tombs, you would know that all of them need to be “rolled up.” There is a little ledge built into the rock in front of the opening so that when you roll the stone, you are rolling it down, and it locks in there. To push it up is extremely hard. Up until recent times, most of the stones in front of those tombs, though fairly good size and unmovable by ten or eleven men, were not adequate in describing this tomb, because it was a family tomb. Now Joseph of Arimathaea had it prepared for himself, and we had not really discovered a tomb like that in first century AD Jerusalem until a few years ago.

Across from the King David Hotel (you can look right at the citadel of the Western Wall of the Old City), in the backyard of several office buildings is a sepulcher. It is a family sepulcher from the first century AD and the stone is still there. They even invite you to try and move it. It is not as high as I am tall, and is about eight inches thick with rough texture. It is shaped like a huge cylinder—a wheel which you roll down to close and roll up to open. They had to use machinery to get it out of there, but now it sits there where you can go and practice trying to move it. We would get eleven of our biggest men (after all maybe the disciples were huge Jews), and the eleven men could not even budge it. It never even blinked. It did not move at all, and they were totally embarrassed. A lot of other people came over and tried. You know, it is interesting to watch what happened to the tour group as they were doing this. After they finished, I said, “Well

what do you think?” This one guy turned to me and said, “The disciples couldn’t have stolen the body.” I said, “That’s right.”

When you talk about the Resurrection, we do not need to run away from the truth. We just let people explore the evidence and go after it however they want.

Remember that the absence of the body of Jesus was also startling to the women. “Where have you taken Him?” “If you know where you’ve taken Him please tell us so we can go get....” The absence of the body from a closely guarded tomb! Those women ministered to Him. They knew Him quite well, and they knew that He was dead. They knew that He had been buried. Then they knew His body was gone.

The crowning blow to this argument is that the disciples did not believe the women when they told them about it. You mean to tell me they got together, mustered their courage and said, “Oh it must really be true. We will go down and roll the stone away.”

“Don’t need to, the stone is already gone.”

“It’s already rolled away.”

“Well, how did they roll it away?”

“An Angel of the Lord rolled it away.”

Do you understand that wherever you go on this you are going to get messed up? The truth of the matter is that they did not believe the women and Jesus had to rebuke them that same night for their hardness of heart and unbelief because they did not believe the women. Did the disciples steal the body? No, they did not steal the body. I will tell you another thing. The Romans did not steal the body and neither did the chief priests and scribes, because they wanted to find that body and kill the movement of Christianity. It spread like wildfire.

The third reason to believe the resurrection is the attempt of the Sanhedrin to explain what happened. I have already mentioned this. They never questioned the report of the guard. Never. They did not even check it out themselves. They knew that they would not have been there if it had not happened. Think it over, class.

What about the grave clothes? How do you figure that one? They were all there. As a matter of fact, the napkin at the head was folded. It was like somebody came out of it, saying, “I don’t want to leave a mess here,” and just folded it back up and put it at the head. That was God’s little way of letting the whole world know that He was resurrected. Remember that when John saw it and He immediately believed. He knew it, because if anyone had come to steal the body, the unraveled grave clothes would have been a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes in between those wrappings. It would have left on unbelievably large, gooey mess. If you have ever seen that done, you would know that it is a mess. It is a terrible mess. It would be stacked up and stinking. Yet here are the grave clothes neatly there, and only the body is gone. The head piece folded neatly to show you that there is no problem. No wonder John, kneeling down and looking at that, knew that it was true. He was gone. He rose from the dead. No one could have done that, except the Son of God. No one could have. Did they take it to the cleaners to get all the oil off it? No, they

do not even save those because they are unclean. It has been on a dead body. You cannot even touch it.

Do you understand that the whole evidence is unbelievable? The Sanhedrin knew. These guys would not be there, this Roman guard, unless something had happened. Do not you think that Roman guard told them about the grave clothes? Sure they did. They would have easily told them every detail of it, trying to escape execution. They say, “You have to do something. We set this up for you. We put the guard there. Now what are you going to do?” as they appeal to the Sanhedrin. “The only thing we know now is to say that the disciples stole the body.” They hoped that Pilate would believe that.

If that is not enough, the fourth evidence is that these same guys who supposedly stole the body are back in Jerusalem preaching that Jesus is alive and are willing to die for it. I do not know about you, but I know something about fakes and charlatans. They do not die for error; they only die for the truth. You are not willing to suffer for a trumped up scheme. It was true. There was a definite change in their attitude and in their response. As I said, they all forsake Him and fled as Matthew 26:56 says. They did not believe He would rise from the dead, as Luke 24 tells us. Now we see this new courage in their witness.

There was an old gentleman on our tour group a couple of weeks ago, and I took him to the torture chamber where the apostles were beaten in Acts 5. It is below Caiaphas’ house, where the Sanhedrin met. I explained to him how those little notches and holes in the upper part of the rock is where they tied their hands up and stretched them. The ones on the pillars is where they would tie their feet. They had them spread-eagle, and then used a cat-o-nine-tails to whip their back. The cat-o-nine-tails was made of pieces of bone which were tied up in leather strips. When it was

whipped, it would have lacerated the person's back. Most men died under it, and after being beaten, the Bible says that the apostles went out praising the Lord and thanking God that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name's sake. Did they then go home and hide? Any Jew will tell you, who is a guide worth his money, that it is a miracle they were able to walk back to the temple area. Most people could not walk for days—if they even survived it. These guys went right back to the temple mount. It was not that far, but they walked right back to the temple mount and kept preaching. Their backs were lacerated so bad that it would have exposed the bones, but these guys said, "Praise the Lord. Let's go back; let's let them know that it's the truth."

The actions of the apostles after the resurrection are a proof that He is alive. You would not do that unless you really believed it. "What if they kill us, guys? Let's go back. He rose from the dead, and because He lives, we shall also live. Let's go back!" All of them were tortured and killed except John. Every last one of them was tortured because of their faith and their refusal to back down. "He arose from the dead. He's alive. You do what you want to me."

Jesus said, "Do not ever fear him who can kill your body. You fear Him who can cast both body and soul into hell." This old gentleman is looking at that as I am explaining it to him. He turned to me and with little tears coming down his face, and said, "A man wouldn't do that unless it was true." He said, "This is really true, isn't it?" I said, "Yep, it really is."

Now, a lot of people are willing to die for something. We know that in World War II, the Japanese pilots did that. By the way, Iran is training pilots who are going to be suicidal. Islam teaches that if you kill Jews or Christians and you are killed in the process, you are instantaneously rewarded with eternal life. That is the argument which a lot of people use, but that is not our argument. Our argument is not that somebody was raised in all of this and believed

it all his life. No, the disciples did not believe right up to the night of the Resurrection. It is a miraculous change in a short period of time that is unexplainable.

The fifth evidence is the appearance of Jesus after His resurrection. We know from Acts 1:3 that it extended over a forty day period. People say, “Why was He here for forty days before He ascended?” The answer is, “To give many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). The Bible does not leave anything up to conjecture or human opinion, but it clearly presents the evidence as though this was all going to be in a court of law. Luke said, “By many eyewitnesses we give you proof that proves the certainty of these things we have told you.”

These appearances were given to different people in different situations at different locations, as 1 Corinthians 15 affirms. We know that His body was examined carefully by the apostles. Jesus invited them, “Touch Me and see. A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see Me have” (Luke 24). First John 1:1 says that our hands have handled Him and touched Him.

Now, those appearances are very important, especially those on the first day. Here they are:

First, we know from John 20:1-17 (the story that we read you last time) that Mary Magdalene was first. She did not even know that it was Jesus when she first talked to Him because He just called her, “Woman.” When He said her name, “Mary,” there was something in way that He said it that made her know that it was Him. She turned around, and there He was. She threw her arms around Him. And so, Mary was the first one, a woman out of whom He had cast seven devils.

Second, we have the women in Matthew 28:9-10, who meet Him on the road. They throw their arms around Him too, hanging on for dear life. We mentioned that last week.

Third, we have Peter in Luke 24:34. The report was given, by the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, that He has also been seen by Peter. There are a lot of reasons for that. Peter appears to be the spokesman that God used. He is the leader of the apostles, and the spokesman on the Day of Pentecost. Can you think of another reason why He might have done it? Peter denied Him. He sort of embarrassed Peter, in front of the other disciples. Peter said, "I'm going fishing." "Lovest thou Me more than these? You said you did Peter. Do you now?" Peter got grieved when He did it the third time. Jesus even told Peter how he was going to die. Peter said, "What is this guy going to do?" as he pointed to John. Jesus said, "I'll take care of that" (My translation). You can read it later. Jesus said, "Don't you worry about him. You just follow Me." He first appeared to Peter, and so if that was the third time, as John 21 says, that He appeared to His disciples, then it had to take place after He appeared to Peter that first day. Peter had some problems adjusting, and excepting that he could ever be used.

Is there anybody here that has come to know the Lord, but because of something you have done, you think you may be disqualified? All of you should raise your hands, because you all have done something. Were it not for His grace, none of us would be able to serve the Lord. How sweet of the Lord to go to Peter first before the other guys. "Peter, it's okay. I forgive you." Apparently it took a few days for Peter to really get the fact that he is forgiven through his brain. This is a great story.

The disciples that night, minus Thomas and Judas, were rebuked by them for their hardness of heart. Thomas was eight days later and Jesus said, "Behold My hands and feet." Then Thomas fell at his knees and said, "My Lord and my God." Jesus then said, "Blessed are you because you have seen and believe, but blessed are those who never seen and yet still believe."

The sixth evidence is the acceptance of the garden tomb in Jerusalem as the place where Jesus was buried. This one is a little shaky. First, if you are a Catholic, you do not agree with this. Second, if you have a little Jewish background and understanding, you probably do not believe it either, but let me kind of deal with it for a moment.

Go to John 19 so that we can look at the facts from the Bible first.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and
in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.
There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation
[day]; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. (John 19:41-42)

How do you have a garden in a dry and barren desert land? You need water, and in front of the garden tomb is a cistern that holds 250,000 gallons of water. It is one of three systems in ancient Jerusalem. We know there was water available there, and that is why it is a powerful argument. A giant cistern of water holding 250,000 gallons below the ground is right in front of the garden tomb. It is to the left as you come out of the tomb.

If I ask you about the evidence of an ancient garden, you are going to tell me about the cistern, right? Number two, you are going to tell me about the ancient wine press. There is an ancient wine press right in front of the garden tomb, which tells us that there was a vineyard there. We know that there was a garden there at the time of Christ (nineteen-hundred years ago).

But is that the location? It is still a problem. Joseph took the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in a linen cloth.

And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. (Matthew 27:60)

This is a very significant point about the burial of Jesus. A lot of graves are like our graves. They are in the ground—in dirt. The decay process is a factor here. Whether it is an animal being buried or a human being buried. We have instrumentation today, modern technology, where we could go into an ancient grave and detect whether or not any bodies of animals or humans had ever been in that grave. We can detect that, and as you might imagine, that has been done to the garden tomb. The reason why you can do it to the garden tomb is that it also was carved out of rock as a lot of tombs are in Jerusalem (because there is a lot of rock around). Because it is out of rock, it is easy to discern whether there is any (animal or human) decay in the tomb. There is no evidence—no trace at all—of any plant, animal or human decay in that tomb when it was discovered. They argue that that is proof of the resurrection.

I told you that this is one controversial point. Now what would be your answer? Suppose you are playing the devil's advocate. You are an unbeliever. What would you say to this evidence? It just means the tomb was never used or the body could have been stolen. That is all it means. All we know is that there was no animal, plant or human decay in this tomb. That is all we know.

We do know that the tomb was prepared for somebody other than who used it, according to the Bible. It was Joseph's "own new tomb." Now the garden tomb is a family tomb. The father is

always on a ledge, carved out of the rock. There is a ledge. You lay the body, and they dig it out so that the body does not roll off. There is a ledge of rock, as it were. They would just dig it down a little bit. So it is like a bench, and that is where the body of the father would be placed in a family tomb. There is a ledge there that prohibits the body from rolling off. The interesting thing about this tomb, when it was uncovered, is that at the end of it, the father's spot is knocked out. The ledge, which was dug out by hand, was extended ten to twelve inches longer. It was almost ten to twelve inches longer. Let us be very accurate here. The only thing that the evidence means is that whoever originally bought the tomb for his family was not the one that was placed there. It could have been that he died somewhere else and they never brought him back. It could be that they decided another member of the family should have it. Whoever it was, he was taller than the man for whom it was originally prepared. The body would have been longer.

The reason why some men make a point of this, is—remember when He was in Jericho? Zacchaeus, who was a little man, had to climb a tree to see Him, but the crowds he could easily see and Jesus was always noticeable in a crowd. Tradition (and I do not know whether it is legend or history, but I imagine it) says that Jesus was taller than the average Jew, who were normally quite short at that period of time. He was taller. That is the reason why in the Gospels, when you are reading stories, it seems like everybody is seeing Him quite easily. Some believe, and it was an early church tradition that He was tall—probably more than six feet tall—which was unusual for Jews of that time period.

Do you understand why I say it is questionable evidence? I can knock this thing apart myself without too much trouble, but it is interesting. If all these things are true, then it becomes quite interesting.

The other thing that we learn in John 19:41, is in the section that says that in the place where He was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new sepulcher wherein was never a man yet laid. In the other passage, all we know is that it was a new tomb that was prepared for a man who was giving to someone else. Here it makes it clear that nobody in the family has been in that place yet. That is why you can trace it for the corruption decay issue, because it is made out of rock.

Another problem is in Mark 16:4 where we are told that when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great. The “very great” means that it was larger than the normal stones. About a hundred to two hundred yards north of this garden tomb are the sepulchers called the King of Judah Sepulchers. They are first century tombs and I have been there and I have crawled in them. They have smaller openings and smaller rocks in front of them. Now the rock that went in front of this garden tomb is no longer there, but the trough in which it would roll is there, and it is on an incline.

This is the verse (Mark 16:4), where the Greek word for “rolled away” in English is “rolled up.” We know it was an incline, and in front of the current garden tomb there was a very clear incline.

The place where He was crucified is related to this as well. Near the garden, a lot of people like to this place where you can see the pictures of that what looks like a skull (at least the bridge of the nose and what looks like two eye sockets). Please do not believe that. I know it brings people a lot of wonderful vibrations in their heart and they sing the song, “On a hill far away, stood an old rugged cross.” The Bible does not say that he was crucified on a hill. The song says that, but the Bible does not. First, that area that shows the skull is a part of Mount Moriah. It goes all the way over. It was cut out and a road was made there shortly after the time of Christ. Whatever skull you see, and boy you have got to strain to see it, is nonsense. The place of the skull is referring to

actual human skulls that were always left there by Jews when they stoned people. The execution method of the Jews was stoning. The Roman method was crucifixion. How do Romans crucify? Well we know that from Roman history, it was always on the ground and always on the main highways and on the other side of the road from where there are residential dwellings. The north side of Jerusalem is a main road going east and west. The crucifixion would have been on the north side of that road. It would have been on the ground. It was the Place of the Skull, *Golgotha*, where people were stoned. There is no doubt that that was where Stephen was stoned. This would also explain the presence on the side of that hill of the church of Saint Stephen which commemorated the martyrdom of Stephen at the Place of the Skull.

There is a lot of evidence there to prove that this is the place. If it is the place where He died, it is still the same hill—Mount Moriah—where Abraham offered Isaac, but the exact location is unknown. It is all the same hill, and to keep the biblical type, it would be nice to know that He died where Abraham offered Isaac, I suppose. Otherwise it messes up a lot of our sermons where we have taught that.

The veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom and was seen. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher (the location that the Catholic Church has within the present wall of Jerusalem, but outside the wall of Jesus' day) and the Garden Tomb, could not have possibly seen temple veil being rent.

We also know that the Bible says that Jesus was crucified on a tree. The whole idea of the cross is questionable. The very word cross is referring to a beam of wood. What probably occurred was that a large beam of wood upon which the body would be hanged was nailed up to a tree exactly the way the Bible says in detail.

What kind of tree do you suppose would you have nailed that beam to? An olive tree. The only one you could have done it to. The only one that could have sustained and held a body in that area. Where are the olive trees? Mount of Olives. Is that not interesting? There might be a connection. Yes, I happen to believe that Jesus probably died on the Mount of Olives. A beam was put up on a tree, the other two guys on the other side, which would also explain some location problems about the soldier who came out. We will save that one for another day, but it is interesting to me, that that is the place where you could have easily looked right down, saw the temple rent.

Frankly, I think that is pretty exciting, because we not only have many gardens here, but we also have sepulchers of Jews who were buried. They are only buried on Mount Olives. There is just too much there. I think that is where He died. The Garden of Gethsemane is also in the same general area.

There is one more reason to believe in the resurrection, and that is the assurance in the believer's heart. Unfortunately, though it looks like a simple point at the bottom, it is a very involved point. A pretty powerful one that will come out different than I would guess any of you would understand at this point, unless you have heard this already. It is extremely unusual, but there is a point in the Bible about how to know the truthfulness of this, and that is, to me, one of the greatest blessings you could ever receive. We are going to wait until next time.

Father, thank you again, that we do have a sure word of prophecy. Thank you that we have a word that we can rely on. Thank You that Jesus arose from the dead. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We thank You that through our Lord Jesus Christ, our wonderful Messiah, our Redeemer, our Lord, we have everlasting life. Thank You that we presently have a great High Priest in the heavens, who daily prays for us. I pray that that present ministry of our Lord, will hit us with a great impact and encouragement today.

We thank You in the precious name of our Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Let us begin with the ascension. Open your Bibles to Acts 1. We want to deal, very simply, with our discussion on the ascension and present ministry of Christ with just three major things: (1) the place where He ascended into heaven, which we will just look at briefly (it establishes the historicity of our Lord); (2) we want to spend some time with the position that He now has in heaven, and how Christians are a little fuzzy on this; (3) we will look at the purpose of His ascension and present ministry, which is a wonderful section.

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; [They might be angels. They might be Moses and Elijah.] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus,

which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

The Greek word for “gazing” is where we get our English word “theater.” It is talking about a prolonged looking. It was not a quick glance. The text seems to suggest that His ascension was slow and not rapid. It occurred in a dramatic form. They were constantly watching as that cloud received Him from their sight.

You can imagine what they felt. What if you were there? He was the One you had loved and served, and died on the cross and rose again, the One that the women grabbed and said, “We’re not letting you go this time.” He said, “No, I need to ascend to My Father. Stop clinging to Me.” They had Him for forty days and now, there He goes. They did not have a Bible like you have with a New Testament to read. Neither did they carry around their private copy of the Tenach (the Old Testament). What would you have thought?

Then they were told that “this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” I would like to suggest that that is referring not to the Rapture, but to His revelation at the end of the Tribulation, when “every eye shall see Him.” At the Rapture we meet Him in the air and the world does not see it.

Peter’s message in Acts 2, brings this up. It was only ten days after the ascension.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath

shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:32-36)

Turn to Romans 8. Romans is the Magna Carta of Christianity, and in it, Paul said the following:

Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:34)

There is an issue of triumph and victory. He died and rose again, and now He is both at the right hand of God (a place of acceptance and approval by God) as well as in a ministry on our behalf. We will say more about that in a moment, but that is your first indication of what He is currently doing up there. He is making intercession for us!

Intercession is one of the words for prayer. For instance, in 1 Timothy 2:1, we have a list of the kinds of things we do in prayer: supplications, prayers, giving of thanks and intercessions. The Greek word means “to fall into,” but it is not talking about falling down. If you think about it, when we say, “You have fallen in love,” we do not mean that you tripped and fell, but that you have fallen in love with this person. It is like the word for intercession. You are falling into somebody. Is it not interesting that our Lord would describe it like that? He would not just say that He is praying for us, or that He is asking God to do something for us, but He would say that

He is giving intercessions for us. This designates a close and intimate caring of everything that goes on in your life, and I think that it is beautiful.

In Ephesians 1, Paul gives some more information about this ascension into heaven.

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward
who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,
and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far
above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and
every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that
which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and
gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is
his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians
1:19-23)

He presumably fills all the believers, in every situation of life. It is the preeminence of our Lord in our lives. This is also a beautiful text.

In Ephesians 4, he gives a very stunning analysis of the matter of why He has given gifted men to the church to equip us for ministry.

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led
captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he
ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the

lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Ephesians 4:8-10)

He first quotes from Psalm 68. The Greek word for gifts is *doma*, not *charisma*. He is not talking about charismatic gifts there. Charismatic gifts are given by the Holy Spirit. *Doma* or *domatic* gifts are referring to people who have been given by Christ since He has gone. Now that He ascended, “what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” Some say that refers to the difference between the cross and the Resurrection. They say that this refers to Christ going down to *sheol* (or *hades*) to proclaim a gospel of judgment (i.e., the reality of what they had rejected would be facing them). He is preaching to the pre-flood generations that are the spirits in prison, mentioned in 1 Peter 3:19. “Took captivity captive” would be the Old Testament saints who are to be taken to heaven. There does appear to be a change in the location of paradise. Jesus said to the thief on the cross, “Today you will be with Me in paradise.” Jews always thought of the believer as going to paradise, *sheol*, the grave, which had two compartments (one for the wicked, and one for the righteous), with a great gulf fixed between the two. Jesus verified that this is the truth when He told the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. It was commonly held among the Jews, and taught by former rabbis.

“He took captivity captive” could refer to the Old Testament saints being taken to heaven. That is a view, which I prefer, but in all fairness, there are many Bible teachers that say, “No, this is talking about His humiliation, as Christ left heaven’s glory and came to earth. Therefore, the earth is the lower parts, meaning that He descended and He ascended far above all the heavens.”

Though I prefer the first view, it is more complicated.

In Philippians 2, we have an additional remark by Paul. He apparently loved to speak about the ascension and present ministry of Christ. That might be good instruction for all of us to spend a little bit more time with it. In Philippians 2:9, after telling us about the person of Christ (that He is both God and man, and had gone to the cross), Paul said, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him.” Now there is a play on words here. The word “exalted” means “to lift up.” This same word appears in John 3:14, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” Now Paul just got through saying that Christ became obedient unto death in Philippians 2:9, “Even the death of a cross.” “Wherefore God has highly lifted Him up,” is a play on the idea that when anyone has put on the cross, they are lifted up on the cross. Then it is jammed into the ground. God said, “Well, *you* may think that as being disgraceful and shameful and awful, but I see it as glory.”

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus
Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the
world (Galatians 6:14).

So “God highly exalted Him” is a play on the ascension, referring to the cross. If He were still on the cross, or dead, or still in the tomb, there is no Christianity. “He gave Him a name which is above every name.” Now we learn that the purpose of the ascension and the exaltation of Christ, is to cause us to fall at His feet—not to sit at the cross and have pity on a dead savior. He rose from the dead! He has been exalted by our God! “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth.”

I remember there was an old man many years ago back in Ohio, when I was pastoring there. Every time I would say, “Jesus,” he would get out of his seat and get on his knees. I could not

figure out for the life of me what he was doing. One time I asked him what he was doing, and he said, “Well it says at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” That is what this man wanted to do. We might smile at that, but I think he might have had something that maybe we need to think about. The Lord was exalted at the right hand of God that every one of us would bow the knee and proclaim Him as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Sometimes we read verses without understanding the context. The context is that He is exalted. Now that He is ascended, what is the proper response of the believer? It is worship! This means, bowing in His presence, and confessing that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Amen. Do not miss this.

In Colossians 3:1, it is as if Paul cannot stop referring to this truth. Maybe some have said it is because he had an encounter with the exalted Christ on the road to Damascus.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are
above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
(Colossians 3:1)

In the Greek grammar, it basically says, “If and it is so.” We would use the word, “since” in English. Apparently, Paul wants us to keep thinking about where He is.

One lady told me that Jesus had come to visit her in her room last night. He sat on her bed and talked to her. I listened to her and she said, “What do you think of that?” I said, “I think you might have had chili to eat. You might be on medication. Had a bad dream, but Jesus did not come to your room. My blessed Lord will not be coming that way. He is at the right hand of the

throne of God, exalted above every name, and He wants you to worship and bow in His presence.” We say a lot of silly things sometimes.

“Set your affection on things above”—I like that. I know many of you have the word “mind” there, but there is something about the word “affection” out of the old King James vocabulary that to me, still tells it better than just, “Set your mind there.” The mind is very much what your heart is. I think we are confused on that one also, because we know the pumping organ is located about eighteen inches from where your brain is, and so we have the idea that these are separated. They are not. The heart thinks, it reasons, it perceives and it knows. I think, because of modern communicate we talk about, “Oh I love you with all my heart,” which means that you can just check your brains off and just feel something. That is not biblical. Sometimes people say, “You’ve just got a head knowledge. You don’t have a heart knowledge.” I know what you mean. What you mean is that they may not have applied the facts that they have learned, but do not ever come to believe that Christianity is not based on head knowledge. Thank God, it is one of the only religions in the world that does not ask you to set aside your brain in order to believe it. God wants you to understand it, search it, examine it, and study it. He wants you to be like the Berean Christians and search and examine the word to see if this is so. Christians are dedicated to proving with evidence what the facts are of Christianity. We do not take this lightly.

There are so many people in a crusade that share this testimony, “I asked Jesus to come into my heart but nothing happened.” What Jesus did you ask? What did you believe about Him? Sometimes they are at a loss to tell you. They do not know what they are believing about Him. There are a lot of guys down in Mexico named that. Why do you not believe in them? What is this? We have corrupted what the Bible actually says, and we have made it something less than what it is. We have no reason to fear or hesitate anybody’s examination of Christianity.

It is interesting that God would say, “Set your affection,” because the mind is what creates the affection. The mind is what controls the emotions, and God has taught that. When He expressed that you are to be renewed, He never said, “Be renewed in your emotional feelings.” He said, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” Your mind is controlling your emotions. That is why it is very important what goes into our mind as well as what comes out of it. It is like a computer, and a lot of us have got a virus in there. It needs to be cleaned out. You do not need Norton’s Antivirus program, but you do need the Lord Jesus and His blood.

We need to understand that when you set your mind on Him who is exalted at the right hand of God, you are setting your affection on Him. It means that you are concentrating and focusing on Him. He is your Lord. He is your master. He is your life. He is your all in all. Do not walk through a day ignoring Him. He is the Lord. He is the king. He is the master. At the same time He is also a shepherd, and a friend. He cares about you and wants you to talk to Him. Do not ignore Him. He is highly exalted, and every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

The Book of Hebrews speaks about the present ministry of our Lord, perhaps in a more-detailed way than other books in the New Testament. It was written to Jewish people who understood the concept of the priesthood. Read these three verses with me:

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of
his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power,
when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right
hand of the Majesty on high. (Hebrews 1:3)

Paul is introducing what is going to be a tremendous discussion.

Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that
come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make
intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

One last verse:

But this man after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever,
sat down on the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:12)

We will tell you what that means after the break.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

The place where he ascended into heaven was the Mount of Olives. There is a little church marking the place, but I do not know for sure where it was. It was a Sabbath day's journey, therefore it was very close. If you have been to Jerusalem you know that the Mount of Olives is very close. Some people have argued that because Zechariah 14:4 says that His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, that it is connected with this statement in Acts 1:12. He ascended from the mountain and He will come back on that very mountain. Actually it does not say that. All it says is that His feet will be there. We are going to learn about this when we talk about the Second

Coming in the next couple of weeks, but He does not come back to the Mount of Olives first. He will get up there, but that is not where He comes first. You will find out about that in the next two weeks. Not now.

The two main subjects that we want to deal with (which sometimes present some problems to believers), is the position that He now has in heaven as well as the purpose behind the ascension and present ministry of Christ. I do not think, as I said earlier, it is being dealt with as it should be. It is a very important doctrine in the Bible. Why is it not important to us? I do not know. It used to be found in a lot more sermons and messages than there are now, but I have given you a list of the passages that deal with His position that He now has in heaven.

The problem comes up among evangelical-fundamental believers who believe that He is God. Now, He is God, and as God, He is omnipresent. If I say, “I ask Jesus to come into my heart,” there is nothing wrong with that because in John 14, Jesus said, “That when I leave I am going to send you a Comforter and He will come to you.” Then He also says, “We will come to you and make our abode.” He even says that the Father and He will make their abode in us. I guess that we should start saying to people, “Will you ask the Father, the Holy Spirit and Jesus to come into your life right now?” but that would really confuse some.

First of all, Jesus spoke about being outside the door of the church of Laodicea, saying, “If any man will open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him [like have a meal together, fellowship] and he with Me.” Our Lord taught that His presence can be made real in our life even though He ascended into heaven. He is omnipresent. The question is, “Is the physical body of Christ omnipresent?” The answer is, “No, it is not.” That is what most false doctrines and cults tell you. Therefore to them, He winds up being a sort of an apparition, or an appearance. If He did

it then, He could probably do it now. It does not violate the fact that He is up in heaven, in their view. Well, it violates it in my view.

The physical presence of Jesus Christ is at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. It will not be back here until His Second Coming. The whole point of leaving us gifted leaders (the point of His being gone, “I am going away, but I will not leave you comfortless. I will send the Holy Spirit”) is that He is not here in His physical presence. Those that try to get you to believe the other view (like the lady who had the vision of the Lord showing up in her bedroom) is nonsense. Do you know there are many religious groups who believe that? They believe it very powerfully.

The Jehovah Witnesses got so twisted in this that they believe that Christ did not have a physical body when He rose from the dead. They say it is an appearance of Jesus.

One time, when a Jehovah Witness leader and his trainee came by my house to talk about their beliefs, we got into an argument over the Resurrection. I said, “Give me your Watchtower Bible.” He gave me his Watchtower Bible. I turned to Luke 24, and said, “I do not know about you guys, but I have trouble with a spirit eating food. It says so right here in your Bible.” “Oh, that’s only for our benefit.” “No, it says He ate. Oh by the way, He said, ‘A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see Me have.’” Well, He just did that for their benefit? No, He did not. The trainee, I can still remember him, turned to him and said, you never told me all of this. That leader could not wait to get the trainee out of our house; he was about to lose his own trainee.

Please do not get confused about the omnipresent attribute of Christ. When we spoke about the Resurrection, we came right up to a final point in dealing with the evidences. Remember that the last point was assurance in a believer’s heart. I do not count this as very strong evidence, though

it is to every believer, but I also think that we do not tell it right. I am going to try and explain that now, because it fits with what we are saying about His ascension and whether or not He pays any personal visits here, or if there are any appearances of His physical presence to us.

I might say to you, “I know He lives. He lives within my heart.” There is a song, “Since Jesus Came into My Heart.” This song, by the way, was a bar room tune that Ira Sanky heard as they were walking by a bar in one city. He heard this tune, and liked it so much that he told Moody that he was going to put Christian words to it. Moody was scared to death, “What are we going to tell people?” The first time he sang it, people just loved it until they found out it was a secular song, then they about crucified him. It became a popular song to Christians.

Could you not say that Buddha lives, because he lives within my heart? The Mormons say that they have this burning in their heart. Do you understand that it is not strong evidence? Plus the fact that I do not believe that it is correct. When we interpret the heart as feeling, emotions alone, we are not saying it correct either. If I said to you, “You know I really believe in Jesus with all my head.” You would say, “Oh head knowledge, huh?” Do you understand what I am saying to you? We get this vocabulary going, but we do not explain it to people. Can you imagine if you are not a Christian listening to all of this? “What in the world are you saying? You’ve got to have some sort of emotional deal with Jesus and then you’re in the in-group. What?” Let us start thinking. What we believe about Him is very important.

Even the matter of assurance in my heart, that He is resurrected and that He now lives, is very difficult evidence with which to deal. This is what I think you should believe with regard to this.

This is he that came by water and blood, [even] Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. (1 John 5:6)

Now we have a debatable passage. Some of your have Bibles say that most ancient authorities do not agree with KJV here.

There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one. (1 John 5:7)

The Jehovah Witnesses will jump on this and say it is not in the best manuscripts. Obviously, they want to believe that, because this would be a powerful verse against them.

There are three that bear witness on earth, the spirit and the water and the blood. And these three agree in one. (1 John 5:8)

You read the commentators and it is unbelievable. They have got water as baptism and the blood as the cross. How does that fit in with the spirit and the water and the blood? They get all confused. I suggest you do not read them, just read the Bible.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. (1 John 5:9)

Nine out of ten doctors say this is good for you, and so, we receive the witness of men without even knowing the validity of the product. In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established. Do we receive the witness of men? Of course, we do. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. We would agree. He is God; He does not lie. “For this is the witness of God which He testified of His Son.” Many people read that verse and forget what it is talking about. What testimony about His Son did the Spirit bear witness? Look back at verse 6 which indicates that He came by water and blood.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:
he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he
believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. (1 John 5:10)

I’m going to explain the assurance in your heart to you. “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record” The words “witness,” “testimony,” and “record” are all the same in Greek. “He believeth not the record (or witness) that God gave of His Son.”

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and
this life is in his Son. (1 John 5:11)

Apparently you have to believe that He came by water and blood in order to have this.

He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of
God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that
believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye

have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:12-13)

What is the issue here? The issue is what does it mean when Jesus came by water and blood? Whatever it is, the Spirit bore witness to it and it is the Spirit that is true, because God's witness is greater than that of men. What is he talking about? The apostle John wrote 1 John as well as the Gospel of John. Turn to John 19 to see how the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit.

Have you ever had anybody come up to you and say, "My spirit just bears witness that there is something wrong in your life." The Bible tells you not to do that, and condemns it. "God has revealed to me that there is a spirit of oppression on you." "Really?" The Bible tells you not to do that. You are to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes and then He will bring to light all the hidden motives and secrets of the heart. As a matter of fact, it is so bad, that you yourself do not even know your own motives. How could somebody else know? That is why we are not supposed to be judging outward appearance and acting like we know another's motives.

It is like a guy who sat in the front row of my church in Long Beach for years. People say that he is the meanest and ugliest man that they ever saw, but he was not. He was sweet and kind. He had surgery on his jaw that made his mouth tight up and looked mean and angry, but he was not really like that. He loved the Lord with all his heart, and was a sweet brother, but everybody judged him by his outward appearance.

"Hey, man, you don't look like you feel good."

"I feel fine."

“Well, you know, it shows on the countenance. I can tell.”

“No you can’t. I didn’t sleep well last night. I’m not sick, okay. I’m happy in the Lord. Now get lost!”

We are making these judgments all the time, are we not? Sure we are. “Oh look at his smile. He must really be a Christian.”

“No, he’s a Buddhist, actually. He just smiles a lot, you know.”

You have been in churches where they say, “I tell you, if you really love the Lord let’s all show it.” By smiling? What if I have a broken heart and I just lost my dog or something? Why do I have to smile? Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We say the dumbest things when we do not follow the Bible; we just make it all up.

In John 19, you find the real answer that you are looking for and how the Spirit bears witness with your spirit. Paul wrote in Romans 8:16-17 that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit and we are the children of God. Apparently this is the only way to know that you are really a Christian. We are really checking into you right now.

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and
forthwith came there out blood and water. (John 19:32-34).

Who wrote this Gospel? John. Who wrote 1 John? John. Do you think that there might be a connection? Watch what he says.

And he that saw [it] bare record, and his record is true: and he
knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things
were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him
shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall
look on him whom they pierced. (John 19:35-37)

What is the argument here? Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture and you cannot be saved without it. What is the evidence that He really died on that cross? Out came blood and water. In many of the commentaries they will explain the medical issue of the separation of the blood and He died of a broken heart, *etc.* I am not interested in that right now. I am taking the Bible just like it said, “out of Him came blood and water.” This is proof that He was dead. That is why they did not break His legs, which was also a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The reason that the soldier pierced his side, though he did not know it, was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. “They will look on Him whom they have pierced” (Zechariah 12:10).

Why was He wounded and pierced? Why did He have stripes? The Bible says, “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him” and “with His stripes we are healed.” This is pretty powerful! We are dealing with a very central issue of the gospel.

How do I know it really happened? Because it is in the Bible. How does the Spirit bear witness that you know you are a Christian? It is very simple, if you followed this folks, you understand how assurance happens. If you are truly a believer and you have been born again, when you read the Bible about something like the death of Christ, the Spirit bears witness with your spirit that that is the truth. If you are not born again, you say, “Ah, I don’t believe that.” Do you understand that the way the Spirit bears witness with our spirit is not by some spiritual osmosis or waves running through the air in a good church meeting? The Spirit bears witness with your spirit as you study God’s Word. When you read what the Bible says about our Lord Jesus, your heart says, “That’s true.” No man can say that except by the Holy Spirit, as Paul wrote, because there are a lot of people in this world that do not believe one ounce of it.

Last week, I spoke at *Adat Hamasheach*, a Messianic Jewish fellowship in Irvine, and we had a lot of guests there. I had invited a lot of people and so did a lot of other people. I spoke on who is a Jew. Afterwards a man, who is a Gentile married to a Jewish woman bringing her there (forcing her, I think), and trying to make out like she is a believer, said to me, “Hey, I want you to talk to her. She’s already a believer. Please, just....”

I said, “Hey, you be quiet. I’ll find out.” So I turned to her and said, “Do you believe that *Yeshuah* is the promised Messiah of Israel?”

She said, “I really don’t know.”

I said, “Do you believe that He is God in human flesh?”

“No.”

“Do you believe He died on the cross for your sins—your sins?”

“I can’t say that.”

“Do you believe He rose again from the dead in a body?”

“Nobody does that.”

I turned to him and said, “Your wife is not a Christian, but she seems like a lovely lady. If I were you I would get a little more honest about this.”

She right away says, “Oh and one other thing,” as she talks to him after hearing what I said because I defended her, “One other thing. If you really want to help me, then I want to go listen to this guy. Now, whatever he teaches, that’s where I want to go, and I don’t want you telling me what to believe. I’ll think about it myself.”

So I invited her to come tonight, and I expected to see her tonight. Then I got to thinking, “You know, what I am on tonight are the laws of purity on leprosy,” and she is going to think that I am a wacko. Then I got to thinking, “Wait a minute, King David used leprosy to refer to his own sin, when he said, ‘purge me with hyssop and I will be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.’” The hyssop plant is what was used in the ceremonial cleansing of the leper as you scrub the sore to see if it spread. David said to God, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.” So I think that we can get the gospel in there tonight as well.

Do you understand what I am saying to you? If you want to know the validity of something and you are a true believer, all you have to do is read it. You know there is stuff that I read that I do not even understand, but I believe it. Have you had that experience? You read it and you say, “Boy that is really amazing. It’s God’s Word though. I believe it but, wow. I’ve got a few questions, but I believe it.” Amen.

We are not talking about mind-over-matter, or trying to convince yourself of something when you do not honestly know what it says. I am telling you that if you are already truly born-again, when you read the Bible the Holy Spirit has promised to bear witness and give you conviction and assurance in your heart that what you are reading is the truth. It is amazing to me how unbelievers can read the exact same verses that are precious to us and not see what we are so excited about. It is nothing to them. This is crazy. A lot of us say, “Well, if you had a new modern English it would really be a blessing to you.” It is interesting how far we have come? If you get the Holy Spirit in you, you would start understanding it—even if it was the old King James Version. Amen.

Now, let us talk about the position that our Lord has in heaven. What is it? Look at the list.

- Ephesians 4:8 – “ascended up on high.”
- Ephesians 4:10 – “ascended up far above all heavens.” We know of three heavens in the Bible, according to 2 Corinthians 12, where Paul was taken up to the third heaven. We think there are three. Shirley MacLaine says that there are seven, but I believe that there are three. The Mormons also have more, but I believe three. Our Lord was ascended far above all heavens. The third heaven is supposedly where God

dwells, but our Lord is so great, that He has ascended above that as well. You are going to worship Him in the future.

- Acts 2:33 – “by the right hand of God.” This is said of him several times.
- Acts 2:34 – “into the heavens.”
- Acts 7:55-56 – “standing on the right hand of God.” This is what Stephen observed in Acts 7. He must have got up as an encouragement to Stephen because most of the passages say He is sitting. The word used for “to stand up” is the same Greek word meaning “to rise from the dead.” I think that Stephen needed that as they stoned him to death. He is at the right hand of God (cf. Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1).
- Hebrews 1:3 – “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” It says many times (especially in Hebrews, but also Colossians and others) that He sat down at the right hand of God. Why is that so significant? Why is that theme being pushed? The answer is really quite simple. No priest ever sat down in the tabernacle or temples in the Old Testament; there are no chairs there. The picture was of somebody who never finishes his work. When the Bible says that He sat down, “By one sacrifice He had offered for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.” When He had purged our sins, Hebrews 1:3, He sat down. You see, this was written to the Jews, and the Jews would have understood this and known that the work is done. The sacrificial system is over. He sat down. No priest ever sat down except our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a wonderful thing.
- Consider also Hebrews 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22
- His position in heaven basically reflects three things. I have already mentioned them in passing, but let us make sure that you have them.

- It reflects God's authority. He is at the right hand. Now if you want to study that for yourself, look up on your computer, "the right hand," and you will see tons of passages. It demonstrates the power and authority and justice and judgment of Almighty God. He is at God's right hand. Whoever is at the right hand is the one who is being ordered to carry those things out. Does our Lord carry out judgment on behalf of the Father? Absolutely. The Father even gave all judgment unto the Son. Who will be sitting on the Great White Throne at the judgment of all unbelievers? Our Lord will be sitting there as the judge of all the earth; He sat down at a position of authority, exercising the will of the heavenly Father. Jesus came to do the Father's will.
- His position also reflects God's approval. When it says, "At his right hand," God exalted Him. Lifted Him up how much? Above every name that is named. He is above all principality, all power, all authority, all thrones, dominions, everything. The Father has exalted Jesus by His ascension.
- His position reflects His accomplishment, as we have said. He sat down. His work was finished. He said on the cross, "It is finished," and He meant it. The sacrificial system is no more!

A lady actually asked me Saturday, at the Jewish fellowship, "Do you have a Passover in your home?"

I said, "Yes."

"Do you have a lamb?"

I said, “No.”

“Why not?”

“Because the lamb of God has already died and paid for all our sin. It would be an abomination in the sight of God for me to have a lamb on that table.”

“What do you do?”

“Just put a shank bone there as a memory.”

“You don’t eat it?”

“I don’t know if you’ve ever tasted one, but I won’t eat one. It’s just a bone.”

She said, “Interesting.”

I said, “Are you Jewish?”

She said, “Yes, but I have always wondered why we don’t fix a lamb.”

I told her that growing up in a Jewish home is interesting. “Why do we have a shank bone there?”

The official Jewish answer is because there is no temple in Jerusalem.”

But she said, “I’m confused because my rabbi told me that every home is a temple.” She is a smart woman.

I said, “Well I’m sure he’s trying to explain it. The real reason is that we do not have the sacrificial system any more because it all pointed to the Messiah (the lamb of God and the Redeemer).”

“We would not do that,” she said, “that is all.”

I wanted to talk to her more, but you have to learn, when a Jew is done, he is done. He just walks away—“Bye.”

The third main subject that we are talking about is the purpose of the ascension and present ministry. This is a really sweet teaching of the Bible. We will review number one again. Obviously, one of the purposes was His exaltation. Just want to add what we said from Philippians 2. “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that He is Lord.” Is it not possible that the reason we are not submissive at times is that we are not setting our affection (our mind) on Him who has been exalted to the right hand of the throne of God? We forget His exaltation that happened at the ascension, and God wants you to bow the knee to Him, to the glory of God.

One of the most wonderful things that go on, and one of the purposes of His ascension was His intercession for us. Look at Hebrews 4. We looked at Romans 8:34 that tells us that no one can condemn us because Christ died, is risen, and He is even at the right hand of God. He is praying for you.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. (Hebrews 4:14)

He constantly refers in Hebrews to the ascension of Christ.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

Now we are back to those hymns. Does Jesus care? “I need You every hour.” “Simply trusting You every day.” Is He touched? Yes, with the feeling of our infirmities. “In all points tempted or tested as we are, yet without sin.” He had no sin, but yet He knows our struggles.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
(Hebrews 4:16)

“I need Thee every hour.” His intercession provides care. Are you hurting, or do you remember what it was like? Do you remember when somebody really cared? Do you remember what it was like when you shared with somebody how you were hurting and they said, “Well that’s great. The Lord will take care of that,” and they walked away. You knew that they did not really care. Do you remember how it hurt? Have you tried to share with somebody what is going on in your life and they yawn? “Ahhh, I’m sure that was really important to you. It’s late. How long’s your

story?” You understand; it does not minister to your heart. Have you told somebody something really heavy, and they are talking to somebody else at the same time?

“Excuse me, hey John. How’re you doing? What was that you were saying?”

“I was just telling you my life’s in ruins.”

“Well, God bless you, man.”

That hurts. Is that hurting you now?

Are you not glad that there is Someone in the heavens who is over all and yet cares. Jesus cares. I like the word “care,” but I also like the word, “closeness,” because it says that He intercedes. Do you have a relationship with Jesus where it almost seems like you can feel His breath sometimes? It feels like it sometimes, yet other times He seems so far away. God tells you why that is. If there is sin, ugliness, bad attitudes, or whatever, His hand is not shortened, and His ear is not heavy. The problem is the sin in your own heart separating you. When you are right with the Lord, and you are fellowshiping with Him, how close does the Lord seem to be to you? Now if you do not feel close, guess who moved. It was not Him. He said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” I like that. I need His care and His closeness. He ever lives to intercede.

I like the word, “continuity”—just to make them all start with the letter cee. He ever lives, or continues, to make intercession. He never has stopped. There is never a day that He does not pray for you. Is that not great? Imagine what He sees—what you are in to. What grief must come. No

wonder the Bible says that our sinful attitudes can grieve the Holy Spirit. He is as real as you are. He continues forever, the Bible says, and He never stops interceding.

I like the word, “conquer” (or “conquest”), because there is somebody up there accusing you day and night, and that is the devil. The accuser accuses the brethren day and night, and Jesus calls Himself at the right hand of God, an “advocate.” It is an old Greek word for defense attorney. We still use it today, do we not? Lawyers are called advocates. He is a defense attorney. He is defending you. We overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb, but imagine that the devil is accusing you before God night and day. I do not know if he has a long scroll with your name on it or what, but he is constantly telling the Lord why you are nothing but trash. “Look at the way they act.” Yet Jesus is up there, “But I died for them. See, I paid it, and who can condemn?” It is Christ that died and rose again, who is ever at the right hand of the throne of God making intercession. Is that not great? Praise the Lord!

Another purpose for His ascension and present ministry is His preparation.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I
would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)

Some believe that when He says, “I go to prepare a place,” is referring to Him going to the cross which makes it possible for you to have a place in heaven. Others believe that “No, He was saying I am going up to heaven and going to build you a mansion.” I do not know which one is true, but I do know that He is working in my behalf. I say, “Glory,” and He said, “One day I will come again and receive you unto Myself.”

Why would He say, “In My Father’s house are many mansions” if He didn’t mean it? Some of you have the NASB and others have the word, “dwelling places,” because that is the word. If you like “dwelling place,” God help you. I have read the end of the story in Revelation 21:22. Those are not just some old shacks in heaven. It is a beautiful city that we are going to be a part of. If you want to have an old shack, go ahead, but I am going to have a mansion. I think that the KJV was correct with, “In My Father’s house are many mansions.” Dwelling places does not do it for me. I have been in a lot of crummy dwelling places in my life.

You know that there is something else about His exaltation and present ministry that I think we are forgetting. I do not know why we do not teach it more. It is what I call His fullness as the head of the church. For example, in Ephesians 1 we read about His ascension, but notice the context. He ascended far above all principality and power, and then in verse 22 it says, “and hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him what filleth all in all.” In Colossians it says, “Christ is all in all.” Is that true? Sure, it is true. It is in the Bible. But do you understand that?

The fullness. What is the church? It is the life of Jesus Christ. There is an old Catholic statement that says the Church is an extension of the incarnation, and there is something to that. “God became flesh and dwelt among us.” He ascended into heaven. Our bodies have become the temple of the Holy Spirit, but is all the fullness of God in your one body? No. He says in the church we see the fullness of Christ’s life. You know something about Jesus that I do not know. He has done something in your life that He has not done in mine. I know things about Him that you do not know. Together it forms the fullness of the life of Christ in every one and in every situation. Jesus does not sit in heaven like the Deists says, “Winding history up like a clock and just watching it unwind.” No, He is actively involved in every one of our lives. Your life is going to become so

much more meaningful as a Christian, if by faith, you walk that way. “Walk by faith, not by sight.” The Lord Jesus wants to live His life in you. The Bible says, “Christ in you is the hope of glory.”

If you want to do a neat Bible study, just take the words, “in Christ,” or “in Him.” It is unbelievable. Do you realize how often that is in the epistles? What is it to be a Christian? It is having Jesus Christ living in your life. We might say it is through the power of the Holy Spirit, or through what I know about Him, or what I have read about Him in the Bible, but we also know, that, because He is omnipresent in terms of spiritual presence (in a real sense), the Lord Jesus Himself has made His life possible in me. Of course, the truth of the matter is that my physical life comes from Him, as well as my spiritual life. It is really what it means to be born again. It is the fullness of the Lord Jesus.

I love Colossians 2:9, which says, “The fullness of God dwells in Him in bodily form.” All of it! Then it says, “Ye are complete.” It is the same word for “fullness,” or “filled up,” in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. He said, “Ye,” not “Thee.” In other words, only the corporate body of believers experiences the fullness of the life of the Lord. That is why we need each other. We cannot walk alone.

There is one more thing to discuss, and that is His expectation. Do you know that everything, including unbelievers, every part of this world and its system is all going to be put under the dominion and authority of Jesus Christ? During His millennial reign, He will be calling all the shots. He will be in charge. He will not have a cabinet. There will be no CNN to report on it. He is going to establish His kingdom on earth, and we are going to rule and reign with Him. When He ascended into heaven, He was exalted. That is not the end of the story.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. [The Father will never be put under Him.] And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

(1 Corinthians 15:24-28)

Do I understand that? No, but do I believe it? Absolutely! Apparently someday after the millennial reign of Christ, when He exercises His authority over all things that will be put under His headship, then He is going to deliver all things back to the Father in some dramatic way that the whole world will know that the plan of human history began and ends in the heart of the Father. The ultimate object of God the Father is that we would worship and praise Him forever. Amen!

Lord, we thank You for Your word because we would be so lost without it. Help us, Lord, to understand the present ministry of our Lord, who is ascended into heaven and who will come back one day. In our expecting of His coming again, may we not ignore and neglect His intercession, His care, His comfort, and His compassion for us now. It is a throne of grace that we come to now—not a throne

of judgment. Your throne is where we find mercy—that is, you are holding back from us what we really deserve. Your throne is also where we find grace—that is, you giving us what we do not deserve. You give us grace to help in the time of need. Lord, may we see our need and bring it to You. As the song said, “I must tell Jesus all of my trials. I cannot bear these burdens alone.” Help us to believe that and to apply it. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Lord, I pray that You would minister to our hearts, by Your Holy Spirit, as we study Your Word. Help us to be open and teachable to what You want. Thank You for this time. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a very serious matter. It is interesting to me that liberal doctrine says that there is no visible bodily return, but that the Second Coming means Christ comes into your heart. Well, He might come into your heart, but He is coming again, and the Bible is filled with it.

One writer I was reading said that one out of every twenty verses refers to the Second Coming. I am not sure about that because I did not read the entire Bible to find out if that was true, nor did I count them, but I know that the Second Coming is spoken about a lot. We have books dedicated to the Second Coming. The book of Daniel certainly speaks a lot about it, though not all of it, but probably a good half of it. We also have Zechariah, which perhaps all of it is related to the Second Coming. We have volumes of remarks by Jesus referring to the Second Coming. There are parables of the kingdom of heaven, and also an entire book in the New Testament dedicated to the Second Coming, whose name means the revelation of Jesus Christ when He comes again. That is the Book of Revelation. We have some chapters with whole passages dealing with the Second Coming, and it makes me wonder why there is so little among mainline churches on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is almost like they are fearful of it. If you are not really saved, you ought to be fearful, but if you know the Lord, it is our great joy. It is our anticipation. It is

what we are waiting for, and that is a little insight into what is wrong with our Christian life. Many of us have the spiritual “blahs” because we are not anticipating the Second Coming. We are not expecting it. We think life is going to go on. With all we have seen happen in recent times, and I mean recent, in your lifetime, it is going to be amazing if Jesus does not come before this generation is finished. It will be amazing. How in the world would He reconstruct all of the events that have occurred and line it up the way that it is lined up at the present time? Of course He can do that, and world war could perhaps change every thing, but I do believe we are in that time. Any moment now Jesus could come and we will be out of here. If you are in heavy debt on your MasterCard or Visa, this could be good news. The debt goes to the antichrist! But we do have a certain sorrow in our hearts when we think about the immediacy of the return of Christ because we realize that there are family members and friends who, in fact, do not know the Lord.

This is a doctrine of salvation. Sometimes people ask me, “Do you have to believe in the Second Coming in order to be saved?” I answer, “Is the grass green? Is the sky blue? Is the pope Catholic?” I mean, “What are you saying? Of course we have to believe it.” There is no gospel without the return of Christ. If He is not returning, it affects your understanding of the Resurrection. So this is all very important stuff.

We are going to deal with the following subjects: (1) the promise of His coming, (2) the problem of His coming as it relates to time and place, and (3) the power of His coming. Let us start with the fact that the promise of His coming was given by Jesus Christ Himself. If you have your Bibles open them to John 14:1-6, which is a wonderful passage.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I

would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:1-6)

The night before He went to the cross, Jesus made it very clear that He was going to come again. He said, "I go to prepare a place." Some say that He is preparing the mansions. Some say He is referring to His cross which would prepare a place for them in heaven by His death. There are different views on that. Acts 1:9-11 records the ascension:

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

They watched as His physical body ascended to heaven, and He will so come in like manner. He is going to come back in the same physical body, and it will be visible exactly like it was at the time of the ascension. The two men in white apparel, whoever they are, give the same message

that Jesus had given to His disciples the night before He went to the cross. They promised that Jesus Christ would come back again.

In Revelation 1:7 it says, “Behold He cometh with clouds.” This text said a cloud received Him out of their sight. He will come with clouds according Revelation 1:7. It is interesting that three times at the end of Revelation, Jesus is quoted as saying, “I come quickly” (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20). These are basically the last words of the Bible. The apostle John ends this last book of the Bible with the prayer, “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

When you play down or ignore or neglect the Second Coming of Christ, you are certainly ignoring the biblical layout of this material and the fact that the last thing God wanted you to know is that He is coming. Maybe that prayer should be on our lips. “Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

He is going to come on His time schedule. Your prayer is not going to make it earlier. So why pray it? The answer is that it represents the expectation of your own heart and your relationship to Him. Why do not people look forward to the Second Coming? There are a lot of reasons. They do not know much about it. They are not really in love with Jesus Christ like they say they are. They do not really know Him well enough to want Him. The cares of this life are choking the word. They, in fact, want to live down here and enjoy everything it has before they go home to be with the Lord. It is kind of interesting, as to why people are not constantly thinking of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. Maybe it is good that we wake up each morning and wonder if this is the day. Live your life as though it were the day of the Second Coming. Maybe you would talk nicer to people. Maybe you would get more accomplished. Maybe your walk with the Lord would be stronger. I do not know, but that is an important thing to do.

Now this prediction of Jesus which was reiterated by the two men in white apparel, was grounded in the predictions of the apostles who wrote the New Testament. Here is where I do not understand the people that do not see the Second Coming. It is everywhere. Please turn to Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. We call this passage "The Rapture of the Church." The word "rapture" does not appear in the text or anywhere in the Bible. So where did we get the word?

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

The phrase, "caught up" when translated from Greek into Latin, is the word *raptureo*. We just said it in English, "rapture," and so that is where the word comes from. It is a transliteration of the Latin for the word in Greek, "caught up."

Let us read what Paul says about the Second Coming of Christ.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

It is easy to be neglectful of this doctrine at the funeral of a friend or family member. It is easy to forget what the Bible says. I have seen it over and over again. You can sit in class and say, "Well I would not be like that," and then someone close to you dies and at that funeral it is amazing how that is a test to what we believe.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them
also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

(1 Thessalonians 4:14)

This is an interesting revelation. The Rapture is not taught in the Old Testament, but it was given directly by Jesus Christ to Paul. Perhaps it was given, as Galatians 1 argues, in the three years that he was out in the Arabian Desert, because it says that he received direct revelation from Christ. It is interesting that it does not appear in the Old Testament. The other day on the radio I heard a pastor trying to make it appear. But no way! The Rapture is not mentioned. It was a brand new and direct revelation to Paul.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which
are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not
prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall
descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the
archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ
shall rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16)

It is very hard for me to believe that religious cults could believe that Jesus is Michael the Archangel, on the basis of this verse. It says the Lord Himself will come with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (*i.e.*,
raptured) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in

the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore
comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians
4:17-18)

You will need to do that frequently if you have a heart for God. You will see people discouraged about a lot of things in life. We are to encourage one another with these words. He actually goes on and discusses the Day of the Lord.

In 2 Thessalonians, the coming of Christ is at the end of the tribulation.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

(2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

Now here is the coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation. He deals with both phases of the Second Coming. If you are troubled about this and you really want to study it, though it is not required, I have a set of tapes called “The Case for Pre-tribulationism” that walks through the whole argument. If it is in your mind that you want to really get it down, and therefore answer everybody who does

not believe that the Rapture is before the Tribulation, then get these tapes. We are going to talk a little bit more about that here in a minute.

Paul clearly deals with the Second Coming in a multitude of ways. So does Peter, and in setting the stage for our understanding of the Second Coming we must be aware of the fact that all of the writers of the New Testament refer to it. It is even referred to in the little one-chapter book of Jude, at the end and in the middle. In 1 Peter 1, Peter mentions very clearly the importance of the Second Coming in relation to all of us.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.
(1 Peter 1:6-8)

The third chapter of 2 Peter, in its entirety, is given to His Second Coming at the end of the tribulation in power and great glory.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8)

According to this, there has only been two days so far.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

(2 Peter 3:9)

He is not delaying for no reason at all. Why has He not come? He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Are you glad that He waited for you?

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10)

The “Day of the Lord” refers to a day of judgment, not blessing. It is the tribulation (a day of darkness and gloom). It is a day of death and destruction. It will come as a thief in the night. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. This shall also happen to the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation or conduct and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we,

according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth,
wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter 3:11-13)

All these writers express the importance of the Second Coming. In James 5, he tells us to be patient unto the coming of the Lord—that the Lord is near at hand. In 1 John 3, the apostle said, “Beloved it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.” It is wonderful encouragement.

Go to Matthew 24 please. I want you to list the three primary words in the Greek language that are translated the “coming” of Christ. First is *parousia*, which is used twenty-four times in the New Testament, and basically means, “presence” or “arrival.” An example would be, “The *parousia* of a king that is coming and he is finally here.” Second, is the word *epiphaneia*, which is used six times in the New Testament, and means “appearing” or, literally, “brightness.” It is talking about the display when He comes. Third is the word *apokalupsis*, which is the name of the last book (we say Revelation, but the Greek name is *apokalupsis*). This word is used eighteen times, and literally means “unveiling.” This sheds light on our English word “revelation.” In other words, our Lord Jesus will be unveiled like you have never seen Him. That is why the last book is called “The unveiling.” Did you know there are more names of Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation than all the New Testament combined?

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is not simply the event of His coming (i.e., the last book), but it is unveiling who He is. In the first chapter you see a picture of Him that was unlike anything you read in the Gospels. He has eyes “as a flame of fire,” and feet “like burning bronze.” It is totally different.

In Matthew 24:3 we have a question by the disciples. They said, “Tell us when shall these things be?” in reference to what He predicted (*i.e.*, regarding the destruction of the Temple). “Not one stone would be left upon another would be thrown down.” Let me stop right there.

Recently, in the excavations along the western wall of the Temple Mount, the Israelis discovered the fulfillment of this prophecy. I know that people have been following what Josephus said, but we really never had any evidence, until now. As they were digging down to that level of the Herodian temple (the temple of Herod the Great that was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70), they were shocked to find giant pieces of stone all knocked down. When they uncovered the dirt off of it all, they are all stacked up. It was as if the wall fell down and there was not one stone hooked to another. The Israelis, in spite of not really being sympathetic all the time to *Yeshua*, yet in reality decided to leave that stack of stones there. It is right below the walkway up to the Temple Mount and right down below where you can see it. There is probably a thirty to forty foot section of it. They left them there as the proof that not one stone was left upon another. Jesus told the truth, forty years before it happened. That is pretty incredible.

There was another question they asked. They said, “When shall these things be?” meaning the knocking down of the Temple. But the next question was, “What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the age?” It is one question. “The sign of Your coming and the end of the age.”

I want to point something out to you that really needs to be said, lest you get confused by various people teaching the Second Coming. Some people say the word *parousia*, which means “arrival” or “presence,” is only speaking of the Rapture, because the word in verse 3 for “coming” is *parousia*. It is the same as saying, “What evidence do we have as to when You will arrive and Your presence be with us again?” Using the word, “end of the age,” we know that they are

referring to the Tribulation (the Jewish age). Jesus then begins to describe what they should be looking for.

Look at Matthew 24:27. He said, “For as the lightening cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of Man be.” We know from Matthew 24:29 that it is immediately after the Tribulation. Matthew 24:30 says, “Then shall appear the sign of the coming of the Lord.” You see, *parousia* meaning “presence” or “arrival” can apply to either the Rapture, or His coming at the end of the Tribulation. It is amazing when I read Matthew 24-25 because of what you see in it. We are told in this passage that “no man knows the day or the hour when the Son of Man comes.” We are told in this passage that we should “watch and be ready.” We are told in this passage that the Lord is going to reward His servants. The passage ends with the fact that some, not turning to the Lord, are going to go to hell—to everlasting punishment.

In the judgment of the nations, there were sheep nations and goat nations. The sheep went into the kingdom; the goats went to hell. In Matthew 25:41, He said, “Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” He then said in Matthew 25:46, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal.”

There is a heresy abroad in the Christian evangelical camp. It appears quite often, and is even found in *Christianity Today* by John Stott, who is an excellent teacher, however, he very incorrect concerning this. He said that hell was not forever.

Now in Mark 9:43-48 Jesus said, “The worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.” That sounds like it is pretty continuous. But Matthew 25:46 is the only verse in the New Testament that puts the

same word, “everlasting,” in front of punishment and life. The Greek word *aion*, can mean age. Many of the people who do not believe hell is forever point out its usage in several passages that it is just referring to an age of suffering and time and then all will eventually be redeemed. The word *aionion*, a compound word that derived from the same root, which means “everlasting, forever and ever.” This is the only verse where *aionion* refers to punishment as well as eternal. Notice that King James changed it to “eternal” rather than “everlasting.” To me, they both mean the same thing, but that is part of the game people play with words. Actually, I want you to know it is the same Greek word in both cases, though it is translated different in English. If life is eternal with God in heaven, then hell is eternal with the wicked. It is an awesome thought, is it not?

Well, Matthew 24 and 25 are indeed tremendous passages. You find the same thing in Mark 13 and Luke 21. All of these writers refer to the Second Coming. I could add Jude. You know, we can add a lot of things here. The Second Coming is mentioned, almost without exception, in all 27 books. It is a major theme of the Bible.

Let me put it to you another way. There is some evidence that it is *the* theme of the Bible. In the last book of the Bible, it pictures the return of Jesus Christ at the end of the tribulation, with all the armies of heaven with Him. He has on His thigh a name written. Revelation 19:16 says, **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. It is almost like the entire Bible is pointing to this verse. Why do I say that? In the Bible it is in bold and all capital letters. We could write it “King of kings and Lord of lords” and it would mean the same thing. Then why did the Bible put it in capital letters? This is an interesting question. I wrote on this subject some time ago, but I want to just tell you about it. It interested me so much because I noticed the English. If you look at the manuscripts and fragments of Revelation 19, every last one of them have it in capitals—what we

can uncial letters. It is cursive writing, small letter writing right up until that point, and then it is all capitals. In other words, God intended it to be that way. So the whole world would know that the theme of the Bible is the glorious return of Christ when it will be announced that He is **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. Amen.

I almost need to put on the Hallelujah Chorus right now. I thought about bringing that, but I did not. I have a great CD of the Westminster Choir (five hundred voices) and the Royal Philharmonic of London playing the Hallelujah Chorus. It makes you want to get a bus for heaven right now. It is the theme of the Bible. Do not ever miss it.

The actual name of the last book of the Bible is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Maybe you just want to turn to the first verse. The first verse of Revelation 1 gives the title: The Revelation (the *apokalupsis*, or the unveiling) of Jesus Christ. You see, you can teach the Second Coming as an event, or you can teach the Second Coming as a disclosure of who Jesus really is. When you study be careful that you do not miss the point of the Second Coming. We are going to see Jesus. As Peter said, “the one we have not seen, yet love.” He is One on which we have never cast our eyes, yet we believe in Him. Revelation 22 says that we shall see His face. Wow! All twenty-two chapters of Revelation are about the unveiling of Jesus Christ and I think that it is rather spectacular.

This brings us to the problem. Here is where we are going to be spending a good amount of time. The problem is His coming as it relates to time and place. You and I both know that Christians disagree over this.

In Christianity today there are four views. First of all, the pre-tribulational rapture. We believe that this event will occur sometime previous to the coming Tribulation. By the way, it does not have to be right on the nose when the Tribulation starts. We know it happens before the Day of the Lord begins. What if it is a few years before? We see the Tribulation as a seven year period of time in which God's judgment will be poured out upon planet earth. It will be a holocaust of destruction and death like the world has never seen. We do not believe that the church (the individual believers) is going to be here. We are going to be in heaven.

We have also what is called the mid-tribulational view. A hundred years ago, it was very popular. The best book ever written on Revelation up until that time was called, *The Apocalypse*, and was written by Joseph A. Seiss. The book is in our library, and it teaches the mid-tribulational view. This view is that at the middle of the week, the two witnesses are killed and then they are resurrected and invited to come up here. They see in the two witnesses a symbolism of the church being raptured at the middle of the tribulation, before the really terrible time comes. That particular view is having a renaissance. A very fine man and good Bible teacher (a great student of the Word), named Marv Rosenthal was head of Friends of Israel (one of the finest Jewish organizations among evangelical Christians). They do great work, and I recommend all of their books. The board had to let him go because he changed his view on pre-tribulational rapture, which is their official position. He started another Jewish work, and so he is now down in Florida. He wrote a book that became a best-seller called, *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*. If you read it, you will probably become convinced if you do not have a sharp eye. He presents a lot of arguments to show that the final wrath is only the last seven plagues, and that the rapture only needs to occur before that, because that is called the Day of God's Wrath. Now, I do not believe that. Early in Revelation 6, we are told that the Day of God's Wrath has come, and we are long preceding that event. The mid-tribulational view is growing very strong. I think the reason that

this is happening is because people feel that we are in dangerous times. People are seeing that this looks like what God had predicted. There are more and more feeling like we are in the tribulation and things are going to get worse.

Now, we have another view called the partial Rapture. It is held by certain outstanding Charismatic and Pentecostal leaders, perhaps some others as well. The Christians who hold this view, do not have a whole lot of support, but their particular doctrinal slant does. In this particular argument, they believe that only Spirit-filled believers will be raptured. Carnal believers have to go through the tribulation as God's judgment on them. To me it seems like a Protestant purgatory, but I do not know.

Then we have post-tribulational rapture view. This is the majority view of all church history and the majority of Christians alive today. It connects the Rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4 with the spectacular display of Christ returning at the end of the Tribulation. Now, all Bible-believing Christians do believe that He is coming at the end of the Tribulation. That is our point of unity. The problem of having living Gentile believers at the end of the Tribulation when Revelation has them all killed, makes a difficult problem, because Paul wrote that at the Rapture there will be those Gentiles to whom he wrote who will be alive and remaining. Yet the only people who are spared are the 144,000 and a Jewish remnant. What we have at the end of the tribulation, we have already had all of the Gentile believers killed because they would not take the mark of the beast.

We also have a group of twenty-four elders in heaven. Nobody seems to be able to get that straight on what it represents. We also have in Revelation 20 the statement that there is going to be a period of a thousand years when Jesus will rule and reign on the earth. It is interesting to me that those who believe in the post-tribulational Rapture view, are also those who are amillennial.

That is, they do not believe in a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth. Sometimes they speak of the triumph of the gospel in this present age as God's drawing out a people for Himself. They believe it is symbolic.

What are we going to do with all this? You say, "Well, I'm going to stick to being pre-trib. 'cause I know that's going to be on the test. I mean, I'm not dummy. I wasn't born yesterday. I'm pre-trib, pre-millennial. Amen."

Well, it is a very difficult subject, and in your notes, we mentioned the difficulty of the place of His coming. "We will meet Him in the air," (1 Thessalonians 4) but at the end of the tribulation, He comes to the earth. As a matter of fact, turn to Isaiah 63, which is a messianic passage dealing with the return of the Messiah to judge the nations that have come against Jerusalem and Israel.

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from
Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the
greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to
save. (Isaiah 63:1)

Bozrah is on the plains of Edom (or Jordan today). I was just in Bozrah couple of months ago. There, it is a flatland for miles. You can easily see how many armies (millions of them) could be assembled on that plateau. It is also Israel's most vulnerable point. "This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" The answer is, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like
him that treadeth in the winefat? (Isaiah 63:2)

This is quoted in Revelation 19. His vesture is dipped in blood, and the answer from the Messiah.

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was
none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample
them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my
garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of
vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is
come. (Isaiah 63:3-4)

Now this is all spoken of in the Book of Revelation and quoted phrase after phrase. It deals with Him coming to the earth. He will come to Bozrah first after He wipes out the nations and the blood flows to the horses' bridles and it is staining His whole garment. He will go to the Mount of Olives, put His feet on the top of it and declare victory. His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, as Zechariah 14:4 says.

Now, Paul says, we are going to meet Him in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. The whole place problem is here. The difference between meeting Him in the air and returning to heaven and Him coming to the earth, to Bozrah, defeating all the nations, going up to the Mount of Olives in a victory ascent and declaring victory is quite a difference.

We also have the problem of the position of His coming in relation to the Tribulation. We have it both before the Tribulation, during the Tribulation and after the Tribulation. Here is what I mean.

Where is Jesus during the tribulation? He is at the right hand of God. As a matter of fact, during the Tribulation from Revelation 6 to Revelation 19, He is in heaven the entire time. Yet Jesus said to the disciples, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there you will be also.” We have a problem here about Jesus Himself. He does not come back to the earth until the end of the Tribulation described in Revelation 19. Wherever He is, that is where the believers are. When you die, you are “absent from the body and present with the Lord.” You are going to be with the Lord where He is, and you are also going to come with Him at the end of the Tribulation. This makes a big problem as it relates to time and place, both before the Tribulation (He is at the right hand of God interceding for us), during the Tribulation (He is at the right hand of the throne of God called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb who is opening the scroll and sending out the seven angels to do the work), and after the Tribulation (He is on earth ruling and reigning). Trying to explain that without the Rapture before the Tribulation is very difficult.

If the Rapture is the same as Revelation says, then He has to be on earth during the Tribulation. If the Rapture is the same event as His coming at the end, when we are caught up to meet Him then come back to earth in a procession, then we have a big problem. Those who are post-tribulation say, “Well, the answer to that problem is simple. There’s no evidence that we won’t be in the Tribulation during that whole time while He is in heaven. So it’s like they will agree with us that He is in heaven and we are on earth during the Tribulation.” That is interesting.

You say, “How do we get out of these problems.” Well, you need a break. You have already had too much thinking. After the break we will tell you. How do we know for sure that the church is not going through the tribulation? Have a nice break.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

There were writings a hundred years ago that are absolutely stupid in relation to world events. Time shows us a lot of things. As a matter of fact, within this particular argument is the whole subject of Israel. The majority of Christians in this world do not believe that Israel is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. I think you better wake up to that! Eighty-five percent of them at least, if not more, do not see Israel and a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. They teach that the disobedience and the transgression of Israel broke the promise of God and that they are excluded forever. Then, to answer some of the passages that seemingly say that God has not cast away His people, they say that refers to the church. The church is the new Israel. All the prophecies to Israel are fulfilled in the church. That is an interesting thing.

Now, let me tell you something else that is interesting: practically all those that are in the Reformed tradition (i.e., Presbyterians, some Baptists etc.) are post-tribulational and amillennial. They do not believe in a literal millennium. Also, without exception, they do not believe that Israel is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. They do not believe that at all. It does not make them wrong, but I am just trying to get you to see that this battle has to be fought on several points. You cannot just use one point.

If I were to ask them, “Do you believe that God is fulfilling prophecy with Israel becoming a nation in the end times?”

They would say, “No. That’s just a secular nation.”

If I said, “Well, what about the tree deal. Got a lot of trees there and God said it would be a land of forests and there wasn’t a tree there in 1948. That should make some difference.”

They would say, “No. It’s just a matter of forestry. You know, the forestation process is all that that it is.”

“God did say they would become a major fruit producing country in the world and they are now third behind the United States and Canada. Wouldn’t that have something to do with it.”

They would say, “No. They’re just businessmen and all of that, farmers and whatever.”

Believe me, I have been through this. I ask them, “What do you think about what Paul said, ‘Has God cast away His people whom He foreknew?’”

There answer is, “The people of God are referring to believers—whether they are Jewish or Gentile, and it has nothing to do with Israel.”

I bring up the question, “Well, when the Lord comes they are going to look on Him whom they have pierced.”

They always say, “You bet they will.”

I say, “I have got a problem. It says, ‘The Spirit will be poured on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.’ Now wouldn’t you surmise that if they’re going to be unbelievers, as inhabitants of Jerusalem, when the Spirit is poured on them, then it would be a fulfillment of prophecy if they got

Jerusalem back, even in unbelief. Otherwise, how could the Spirit pour on the inhabitants of Jerusalem if they aren't there?"

They always say, "You are stretching it."

"No, I'm not. I'm just reading it literally." And this goes on and on and on.

I believe that the biggest success that the Reformed tradition has had, because they have a lot of notable scholars (e.g., R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, who used to be pre-tribulational, but is now leaning very strongly toward the Reformed tradition, and James Montgomery Boyce), is that they are all good men that love the Lord. So what is the problem here?

One deals with Israel and the other deals with what Revelation teaches. When you come to that problem you have different views of Revelation. For an example, you have in the Reformed tradition what is called the Preterist view. It is the historical view that everything that was said has already happened during the days of the Roman Empire. You have the symbolic view, an allegorical view which is taught by many people.

Again, I do not want you to get confused. I am going to do my best to answer it, but I do not want you to get confused. If you believe in pre-tribulationalism and pre-millennialism, then you are in the minority. I suppose some of you on the way up might like to tell the others, "Hey we were right, but they would probably like to do the same to you." I think it is a very serious matter. People say, maybe it does not make any difference. Yes it does. It makes a lot of difference in witnessing and evangelism. It makes a lot of difference in how you live your life. Are we really going to go through the Tribulation?

That is why what I am going to tell you now is so critical. Turn please to Revelation 1:19. They will set aside almost every discussion you have until you come to one: the twenty-four elders. Every post-tribulationist that is a scholar that I know of (including George Eldon Ladd who taught at Fuller Seminary and wrote the commentary on Revelation which is supposed to be the best commentary on Revelation from the post-tribulationist view) makes a statement that I am going to challenge. They say that the twenty-four elders represent the church of Jesus Christ in heaven, therefore we all must be pre-tribulationists.

Marv Rosenthal's book, *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*, sold many thousands of copies and people were real excited about it. I called Marv myself. I do not take on the job of criticizing others that I do not know anything about, and so I discussed the view with him. I said, "Marv, look on page 254 of your book."

He pulled it out and said, "What's the problem?"

I said, "You said that the new song, if it was sung by the twenty-four elders about themselves, then we would have to be pre-tribulationists. But that you believe that most ancient manuscripts did not read 'us,' but read 'them.' That's what you said."

"So? I've read that in many Bibles."

I said, "Yeah, so have I." I said, "It just ain't so. So Marv, I give you a challenge to look up all the fragments we have on Revelation 5 on the new song and to see whether it reads they are singing a song about 'them' who will be redeemed on earth during the Tribulation. Or whether it

says they are singing a song about ‘He’ who has purchased us with His own blood as the King James says.”

He said, “I’ll have to look into that.”

I have never heard from him, because he does not stand a chance as I shall tell you in a moment.

The truth of the matter, and this is true of every one of us (whether me or a thousand other guys), is that a little knowledge is always dangerous. You need to pursue it to the point that there is nowhere else to go. Make sure you really have studied that matter.

In George Ladd’s book on Revelation, he says that the twenty-four elders (when you see twenty-four you have to see two sets of twelve) are the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. Is there anywhere in the Bible, that tells you to look at the word twenty-four and read two sets of twelve? My answer to him was, “Why not three sets of eight? Or four sets of six? Or twelve sets of two? You do not have one shred of evidence and you know it.”

We are still back at the problem. There are twenty-four elders who are, obviously, in heaven all during the Tribulation. They are falling down and worshipping the Lord, because that is what they do. Now, who are they? Some post-tribulationists say, “Oh those are just the angels.” Some say, “That’s just Israel.” Then they think about it for a moment and they say, “Well it couldn’t be, I guess, all of Israel, because there is still an Israel on earth and still an Israel that is going to be saved during the Tribulation, according to your view.”

Who are they? Look at Revelation 1:19. This is the outline of the Book of Revelation according to John. “Write the things which thou hast seen.” What had he just seen? The resurrected Christ. “Write the things which are.” That is the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. “And then the things which shall be after.” This is literally after these things.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven:
and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet
talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew
thee things which must be hereafter. (Revelation 4:1)

The exact same phrase as Revelation 1:19 is found in 4:1. We know that “the things which are,” are the seven churches of Revelation. “The things that are after that,” is what is from Revelation 4 on.

In heaven we see a throne set in heaven.

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and
upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in
white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.
(Revelation 4:4)

That is an interesting little identifying verse. They “sit on thrones,” and are “clothed in white raiment,” and they have “crowns of gold” on their head. We also know that they will be casting their crowns at His feet (Revelation 4:10). Is it not interesting that even the post-tribulationists

use that in music and refer it to the church. I find that very interesting. Why would you sing a song about casting crowns at His feet, if you do not believe the twenty-four elders is the church?

Who are these people? We know we have the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. Look at Revelation 3:21. In every one of the seven churches we have this statement: “to him that overcometh.” The same writer wrote in 1 John 5:3-4, “who is He that overcometh, but He that believes that *Yeshua* is the Messiah, the Son of God.” Overcomers are believers. “To the overcomer in the church at Laodicea, who truly believes, I will grant to sit with Me in My throne.” That is kind of interesting. It was said to church age believers and it is one of the descriptions of the twenty-four elders.

They are clothed in white raiment. Look at Revelation 3:5. To the church at Sardis He says, “To the one that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.” Would you say that is a slight clue? That somebody who is a believer in the church of Sardis would have the same description as the twenty-four elders.

Then it says that they have a crown of gold on their head. In Revelation 2:10 it says, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.” To church age believers, he mentioned, that they will sit on thrones, clothed with white raiment, and have a crown on their head, but I am not done yet. I am just warming up.

How do we answer this problem about the twenty-four elders in heaven? First of all, one of the basic rules of Bible exegesis is to let the Bible interpret for itself. According to 2 Peter 1:20, “No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” You and I do not have the liberty to teach something other than what the Bible reveals. Now, where do we find the number twenty-

four in the Bible? It is in 1 Chronicles 24-25. What is it talking about? It is talking about 24 divisions of the Jewish priests who represent the entire nation of Israel. There are twenty-four divisions of priests. The 24 number therefore becomes a number of a completed body. It is a representative group of a bigger body. In this case the 24 divisions of priests represent all of Israel. Are these called priests in Revelation 4? No, they are called “elders.” According to the Bible, elders were in the Old Testament. There were elders in the Jewish corrupt priesthood and Sanhedrin at the time of Jesus, but what do you know about the church as it relates to its represented leaders? What are they called?

In Acts 14, Paul appointed elders (plural) in every church on his first missionary journey. In his instructions for the qualifications he gave it to bishops (who are also called elders) in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter said, “I write to the elders, one who is already an elder, to feed the flock of God and take its oversight and all of that.” Elder is a term that we all know for the New Testament church. They are representatives. The fact that there are twenty-four of them reminds us of the passage in 1 Chronicles 24, the twenty-four divisions of priests represented the whole nation. It is a representative group whose descriptions are the same descriptions given to believers in the church age in Revelation 2-3. That is pretty strong in my opinion, but again, we are just getting started.

There are twenty-four elders with crowns on their head and they throw them at the feet of the Lord and say, “Thou art worthy, O Lord.”

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to

open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:2-10)

Many post-tribulationists say that these twenty-four elders are angels. I do not think so. In Revelation 5:11 it says, “I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round the throne, and the beast and the elders.” The elders are made distinct from the angels around the throne. The post-tribulationists say, “It just says ‘many angels.’ It wouldn’t include all of them.”

Now over in Revelation 7:11 it says, “And all the angels stood around the throne and about the elders and the four beasts.” They cannot be elders because they are separated from the elders in Revelation 7:11.

Who are they? They cannot be Israel because in Revelation 12 we have Israel on earth again.

Who in the world are they? We come back to the crucial problem.

Now go to Revelation 3:10, because this is what they use to prove their point that the church will go through the Tribulation. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.” In the Greek, you have a definite article the in front of “our” and also in front of “trial” or “temptation.” “The hour of the trial.” It is a particular one. As a matter of fact, it is worldwide, which shall come upon the entire world to test or try them that dwell upon the earth.

Go through the book of Revelation and ask yourself, “Who are the earth-dwellers in Revelation?” They are all unbelievers. The purpose of the Tribulation is to test and try unbelievers, and not believers.

We also read here, “keep thee from.” The Greek preposition is *ek*, meaning “out of.” Here is what the leading proponent of post-tribulationism at a major school says: “What that means is ‘immunity from.’ That you will be in the Tribulation, but God will protect you and keep you from all the disasters.”

I said, “Even if it meant that, which it does not, but even if it did mean some “immunity,” we will all be killed. What kind of protection is that?” No, the word “out of,” means exactly what you

think. I will keep you out of this great hour of trial that will come on the whole world that will test those that are unbelievers, those that dwell on the earth. You can check that out in Revelation as to the earth-dwellers.

When it comes down to it, there are a multitude of issues that are thrown into the pot (e.g., Israel, the twenty-four elders and parallelisms, Noah going into the ark before the Flood, which is not a simple parallelism because Jesus used it to compare it to the Tribulation, Rahab saved out of the destruction that came on Jericho, Lot pulled out of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is used of the Second Coming in 2 Peter 2). The very parallel illustrations that are used in the Bible teach the Rapture, and that we do not that we go through the Tribulation.

Teaching God's word is not an easy matter. I think what you want to do here will not be achieved. First of all, why do I continue listening to guys who I do not agree with? It is because of intellectual respect and honesty. I want to hear their positions. I want to read their positions. I do not want to be closed minded. Some people say, "Pre-tribulationism came from a whacko woman a couple hundred years ago, who led the Plymouth Brethren to get into this, and that John Darby affected Scofield and we use the Scofield Bible and so that is how we all became pre-tribulationists." That is wrong. None of those factors were in my life. I think you have to get down to something basic. We have to study His word to be approved unto God—a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. I personally believe that the whole problem starts with the attitude one has toward Israel. If Israel, in your mind, is not in the prophetic plan of God for the future, it is going to affect everything you say about prophecy. That is the truth.

There is a great Bible teacher and excellent scholar named Oswald T. Allis, who taught at Westminster Seminary and was a Reformed amillennialist until his death a few years ago. He has a book called, *Prophecy and the Church*, in which he lays out the most scholarly view of why Israel and the church should be one and the same. I read the whole thing. I do not believe a word of it, but I respect his teaching on it.

Be careful what you mean. You do not downgrade the people, even though you disagree with their views. What I have seen on pre-tribulationism is enough to let me know that the issue is studying the word. Everybody says glibly and in general, “Well they study the word too.” Listen, if we all got down to business and studied the word like we say we do, it might represent a lot. I changed tremendously from when I started in the ministry. I listen to my old tapes and I say, “I disagree with that guy. He’s way off base. Who is that lunatic? Get rid of those tapes.” The point is that you grow in your knowledge. There are a lot of things in relation to prophecy. If you want to understand how to interpret prophecy and the problem, there is an excellent book called, *The Interpretation of Bible Prophecy*, by Dr. Paul Tan. He is interestingly, a teacher in a Reformed amillennialist school. He taught at a Presbyterian Seminary in the Philippines. He is a scholar, and is recognized as so among everybody. Again, he has a book called *The Interpretation of Bible Prophecy*. If you read that book and follow his principles, then you will discover that you are going to be a pre-tribulationist. It is very interesting.

If you want more help on this and the difference between Reformed, Covenant theology, the best book to read on that is *Israelology*, by Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. It is a thousand page book that is very easy to read. It maps out all the current positions of everybody and answers it with the Bible. It is very excellent, and I recommend it highly.

Father, we thank You for all Your love, grace, and mercy. Thank You, Lord that You love us no matter what. Many of us are on the wrong side on many things and Your grace and mercy is always there, loving us in spite of our stupidity and foolishness at times. Help us, Lord, to be good students of the word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Take your Bibles please, and turn to Revelation 20.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:1-6)

The first phrase of Revelation 20:7 says, “When the thousand years are expired.” The war over the Millennium basically comes down to the view of how you teach Revelation. Is it literal? Does it have symbolic language? Is it symbolic language that should be interpreted as an allegory? This battle has been fought all the way through church history.

In the present century (the twentieth century), the Reformed tradition that usually believes amillennialism has really gone to bat on this to prove their point. Behind this point is what we call replacement theology. Only currently is it being called replacement theology. The basic doctrine of Reformed theology is, that Israel becomes the church in the New Testament. That is where the whole problem starts. All Reformed theologians believe that, and as a result, they become amillennial.

Now the problem here is that in Revelation 20 there is no indication here of such allegorical language. In fact, it is quite the opposite. First, we are told that Satan is bound for a thousand years. He cannot deceive the nations until the thousand years are up. So that does not represent the church age at all. We also have the crowning blow to amillennialism, which is in Revelation 20:4 and following. That is specifically, the martyrs are the martyrs of the Tribulation and they do not reign with Christ until after it. You see, we do have a very serious problem, especially if you think the thousand years is the triumph of the gospel or something else in the present church age, you cannot explain this verse. In fact, almost every amillennial book skips it, because this passage teaches a literal thousand years.

And no, it will not do good to go to 2 Peter 3 and tell us that a day with the Lord is as a thousand years. There you have symbolic language: “As a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day.” You do not have that here at all.

I do believe that amillennialism stands on a very weak premise. I know that the majority of Christians believe in replacement theology (including the Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and the Reformed tradition). The majority of Christians, in name, in this world believe in replacement theology (that the church is simply Israel in this present age). I do not believe this.

Let me give you my example. This is not a class in hermeneutics, but in fact, we have to touch on it and I do teach hermeneutics as well. One of the things that you will learn in the science and art of interpretation, is that most Reformed positions interpret the Old Testament in a very allegorical way—if not allegorical, at least symbolical. That is, when they read a verse in the Old Testament, they apply it to the people of God in this age. They will say that the people of God are the same in all ages. No, that is not true. A distinction is clearly made in the New Testament between Jews, Gentiles and the church of God, which is composed of both. We are told that God has not cast away His people Israel in the Book of Romans. If you do believe replacement theology, you will not like my course in Romans. Maybe you should find another teacher. I believe it is very serious. I have debated a number of these men before and I find them totally helpless, inadequate, and insufficient to answer God’s word. What they succumb to is a tradition of interpretation. The moment you start that, you become blind to specifics in the Old Testament.

Another thing I have noticed is that there are hardly any Jewish, Bible-believing Christians who believe that view, for obvious reasons. It is a strange matter, is it not? Why do the Jewish

Messianic believers not become amillennial? It should be obvious—because they believe that God is not finished with Israel yet. In fact, all of His promises to her will be fulfilled. They are not fulfilled in the church.

Just this week I listened to a Reformed teacher on the radio explaining his position on a passage in the Old Testament that had absolutely nothing to do with his position. He took it out of the context, quoted it for his own ends, never even studied what the context was, or if he did, he ignored it. This happens all the time. I am not here to criticize Reformed guys. They have a lot of great teaching there, but prophecy is not one area of expertise among them. It has become a very serious problem in our country because there are a growing number of them teaching God's people and telling them this.

Now, a part of the problem as to why it is serious is because in the Old Testament you do not see the word “millennium,” which is Latin for a thousand years. What you do see are words like “kingdom” and “dominion.” You find the belief in the coming kingdom of God on earth taught in the Old Testament, and that is in fact what we mean by the millennium. This is not a new position. All the Jewish rabbinical scholars of the past believed in a coming kingdom on earth. That is why they were fascinated with the teaching of Jesus, because He did what we call kingdom parables. That was very common among the rabbinical teachers, and so people were very fascinated about what He was saying.

Now, it is true that God is king over everything in the Old Testament. In one sense His kingdom rules over all. That is exactly what the Bible teaches us in Psalm 103:19. The word “kingdom” itself is used three-hundred and forty-two times in the Bible (one-hundred and fifty-eight of those in the New Testament). The term, “kingdom of heaven,” is used thirty-two times all in the Book

of Matthew. The phrase “kingdom of God” is used sixty-nine times. When you add the words “reign” or “rule” you can add another two-hundred and thirty-four usages. The word “throne,” referring to Christ, the Messiah’s kingdom, refers one-hundred and seventy-six times, including six usages that say “the throne of God.”

In His sovereign plan, God, who rules over all and His kingdom is over all, has a visible manifestation of that kingdom, which He is going to set up on earth. All things will be brought under the headship and authority of His Son Jesus Christ, who will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, over the entire earth.

The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting. (Psalm 93:1-2)

Many times in the Bible you can recognize the phrase, “the Lord reigneth.” In Micah, that we quote at Christmas time for the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, it says:

But thou Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

Micah 4:8, preceding that passage, says, “The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”

Zechariah 14:9 says, “The Lord shall be king over all the earth.” Following that is the battle of

Armageddon. “In that day shall there be one Lord and His name, one.” In Zechariah 14:16 it says, “It will come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Gentile Christians all over the world do not have the foggiest idea that we are going to practice Jewish festivals in the millennium. Instead, they put them down and say, “That was law and not grace,” yet they are repeated in the New Testament and point to our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not have sincere belief in Christmas and Easter celebrations with Santa and yuletide and the tree and the ornaments, but I will celebrate any time you want, the virgin birth of our Lord; it does not bother me. I do not believe in Ishtar the Babylonian goddess from which we get Easter; I do not believe in eggs and bunnies and all of that. Every Sunday to me is a Resurrection celebration. He is fulfilling the Feast of First Fruits which is always on Sunday.

When God brought both Jews and Gentiles into the church and began it on the Day of Pentecost, it occurred on a Jewish festival—Shaviot—at which you would wave two loaves of bread as the priest would indicate that there would be one loaf in the future. Jew and Gentile would be one. That happened on the Day of Pentecost and that is always on Sunday as well.

There are a lot of things that bother me about our knowledge. In Daniel 2:44 it says that a coming kingdom of God is going to be set up on earth. This is what it states:

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

In Isaiah 11:1-10, we read about how a branch is going to come out of the stem of Jesse, a root. He is going to rule and reign and the whole earth is going to be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Even the Gentiles shall come to Him!

It is interesting to me that all of these great passages about the kingdom of God coming to earth, about the Messiah ruling in Jerusalem in the land of Israel over all the earth, are quoted voluminously in the New Testament. Therefore, it reminds us that it is going to happen. Continuously in the book of Revelation we read these quotes about the coming kingdom and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 32:1 says, “Behold a king shall reign in righteousness.”

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this [is the name] wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. (Jeremiah 33:14-16)

He is the branch, the son of David. In the book of Revelation, the seventh angel in the trumpet judgments of Revelation 11:15, announces that “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Messiah. And He shall reign forever and ever.”

And as you know Revelation 19:16 says, “On His thigh is a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**”

I have done all of that to tell you that it is utter nonsense to believe in amillennialism, and I would say it in front of the greatest teachers in this land. In conversation with them, I think that they know it in their hearts. They may disagree over the timing. I think that pre/post-tribulationism is a more controversial matter, but the issue of the reign of Christ on earth is not a debatable matter. Many men, in studying the Bible, have said that is the theme of the Bible. Our God reigns. His Messiah will reign over the entire earth. That is where history is headed. I cannot wait, and I believe it is all going to come true.

Here is where some of the problems happen. If you are a Reformed theologian or you are part of the majority of Christians, then you have read the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:1-3. In fact, you are usually called a covenant theologian. Now I believe in the covenants. There are not eight of them like listed in the Scofield Reference Bible, I have only found six and I have studied the usage of every passage in the Bible. When we say that Reformed theologians believe in “covenant theology,” it comes to mean, “non-dispensational theology.” Now, I am also dispensational, and so that may seem a little unusual to you; I am covenantal and dispensational in my theology. I do not believe there are seven dispensations as Scofield says (as mentioned in the Scofield Bible or in the nice book by Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*). I think that it serves as a nice structure or plan, but if you cannot find your verses to prove it, I would check out of it. I am really a weird Bible man. If I do not see it in God’s word, I am not going to buy it.

In Ephesians 1:10, there are three dispensations. One, it says that in the dispensation of the fullness of times. Here it is the word *oikoumenos*, where we get the word, “economy.” It is the

management of things. “In the dispensation of the fullness of times [or seasons].” It means there is more than one. He is going to gather in one all things unto the headship of Jesus Christ. That means, of course, there is one in which Paul was writing. There also has to be one before him. There also has to be the coming one, the Kingdom Age. There are at least three dispensations. I do not know what the names of them are, even though they are in the books, but I have to see them in the Book.

Why do they get in this mess? The Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:1-3 is quoted in Galatians 3:6-9. It says, “The gospel was preached beforehand when God made a promise to Abraham in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Now please listen carefully. I do not want to misrepresent them. I have heard it enough, and so I do not think that I will. Anyway, I do not want to misrepresent them, nor do I want you to hear something I did not say. What they do is eliminate all that is in the covenant except the phrase, “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Now on this point I agree with them. Does that include the salvation of Gentiles in this present age? Absolutely. That is the point of Galatians 3:6-9. None of us are saved apart from the Abrahamic covenant, and so I agree with them. The problem is that they left out the other facts in the Abraham covenant. They said that because the church becomes Israel, it no longer applies.

In the Abraham covenant it mentions three things: a land, a nation and a blessing upon all the families of the earth. Now what religious group came to America and founded America basically? The Puritans. They came to America (many of them on the Mayflower) and they started it. They are all from the Reformed tradition. I have a copy of all of America’s early documents which I bought from the Smithsonian in four giant volumes, and so I read it for myself rather than to hear somebody else tell me about it. That is what I recommend you to do also. Interestingly, Covenant Theology is in all the American documents. You see, this was firmly planted in people’s minds.

First, the land is America. They called it the New Israel. Second, the nation is the church. And third, the gospel would go to all the Gentiles in this present age. In early American documents you can read over and over again that they really thought this land was the New Israel.

One of the shocks that you will have when you go to South Africa is that they also believe that South Africa is the land of Israel. They believe they are the fulfillment of the nation of Israel. That is why South Africa takes a lot of trips to the Holy Land. Anyway, they try to say South Africa is the New Israel, just like we did when we came to America.

With one little sweep, we ignore what God said. I have never found a detailed discussion of the land of Israel in any covenant book. They mention it briefly and move on; if you cover it in great detail, you are going to be in big trouble believing that it is America, because the dimensions of it are in there and it is not in America. It is in the Middle East. We have some problems.

If you are going to follow the nation aspect of it, you are going to have a real problem getting to America. The best thing I can offer you is that after the Holocaust a lot of people migrated here who were Jewish. Maybe that is how they got here. No, they were not from Nephi or the Laminites or anything else from Mormonism. No, they were not the American Indians. You have some real problems.

The dimensions, or the details, of the Abrahamic covenant (the land, the nation, the coming Messiah who will bless the Gentiles of the world) are also called an everlasting covenant. As a matter of fact the term everlasting covenant and everlasting possession of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was said many times of the land promise. In fact, if you read through the book of Genesis and the whole Torah (especially Genesis) you will discover that the major

feature of the Abrahamic covenant is the land—the land of Israel. If you want to understand Israel today, and how the Jewish people think, you had better get that into your head.

What I love to say to my Jewish friends is, “How much land is that?”

“Well, we are doing our best, you know.”

“Doesn’t that go from the River Euphrates to the River Egypt. Well, that’s 1500 miles there.”

“We can’t—We just—Please.”

“Well then, how are you going to get it?”

They do not know. Does not the Bible say that the Messiah will give it to them? The next thing that I tell them usually floors them. I did it in the Temple Institute to the guide, and she was livid with me. I said, “What would you think if I told you that the Temple in the future is going to cover the entire land from the River Euphrates to the River Egypt?” She said that she thought I was crazy.

Did you know that the heavenly Jerusalem which comes down from the sky, absolutely sits exactly on that territory, fifteen-hundred miles on the side? Now, is that not interesting? Did you also know it is going to be on the top of a mountain that will be higher than any other mountain in the entire world? Jerusalem will be elevated. The Holy City will be elevated. The whole world will see it in all its splendor and glory, and if you are a believer, you and I can motor around in

that place with ease. The gates are not closed so we can look at the new earth and the new heaven wherein righteousness dwells forever and ever.

In your notes we mentioned what will happen at the Rapture, but what about after the tribulation? What happens before the millennium? Here is where a lot of Christians are confused. Many Christians believe that all believers are going to be resurrected at the Rapture. No, they are not. Only those that are dead in Christ in the church age are going to be raptured. The Old Testament believers are not resurrected until after the tribulation according to Daniel 12. Again, it is after the tribulation when the Old Testament believer is resurrected.

Also, Israel is going to be redeemed. Zechariah 12:10 says, “They will look on Him whom they have pierced.” Look also at Romans 11, but you might add Zechariah 13:8-9, which tells you how much of Israel is going to be redeemed. Only one-third of Israel will turn to the Lord. The other two-thirds will rebel against Him, even then, and turn their backs on Him according to Zechariah 13:8-9.

The third thing is the revenge of God against all nations who have come against His people. That is going to happen before the millennium, and is a common theme throughout the Old Testament.

Fourth, we are going to see the rule and reign of Jesus Christ, which we have already talked about. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Now, we are just going to touch base on this and then we will wrap it up. At the end of the millennium, there are a couple of interesting things that happen. One, we have the release of Satan who has been bound during this time. He is let out for a short time. Then he goes out and deceives the nations of the world, to gather against this beautiful New Jerusalem and try to take it.

God does not even let them scratch the walls. He sends fire out of heaven and consumes them all. It is “Good-bye devil” as he is sent into the lake of fire forever and ever, where he will join the beast and the false prophet, the antichrist, the false prophet who went there at the end of the tribulation.

Some people ask, “Why in a perfect society, under the reign of Jesus Christ, would God do this?” I think there is one reason, and that is to show us that the problem is in the human heart, not in the environment. What the whole world has taught us all these years is that the problem is outside of ourselves. To this, the Bible says, “No.” The problem is in your own heart. There are going to be children born during the millennium. Not every man, woman and child will be killed at the Battle of Armageddon. There will be many people who never even came to that battle. That is who we will rule and reign over. We are not going to rule and reign over ourselves, even though some of you are trying to do that now in the body of Christ, but it will not be allowed in heaven. We are going to rule over many people who go into the millennium. Apparently, from Isaiah 65, they have one hundred years to make up their minds. If they do not bow the knee to the Messiah at the end of those one-hundred years, then they are killed. You might say that the rebellion at the end is a youth movement. At least it is under the age of one-hundred.

Two, we have the setting up of the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the millennium. All wicked dead will stand before God. There are two important things about that. First, it says, “The books [plural] are open.” Apparently the deeds are judged.

Is your name in the Lamb’s book of life? You say, “Well when I asked Jesus, He wrote it down.” No, all of the names that are in the book of life were written before the foundation of the world, according to the Bible. Would you not like to see a page, in order to see if any of your friends are

on the list? It would give you a little hope and you can stop witnessing. Why do people think, because of your lifestyle as a Christian, if you kind of bomb out that somehow your name gets removed out of the book of life? It is because of one verse, Revelation 3:5. It does not say that at all, but you interpret it that way. To the church at Sardis, He said, “I will not erase your name out of the book of life.” People say, “Well, see. He might.” No, it did not say that. It said that He would not do that. Some people take it as a wonderful promise and others take it as a warning. It is very interesting.

It is “to him that overcometh.” How do you overcome? By scoring points with God, running around church thirty-six times, and attend at least (I would say) seven classes. That will get you in. No, none of that! Who is the overcomer? 1 John 5:3-4 tells you, “This is he who overcomes: He who believes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.” So it is a promise to all the overcomers. “I will never erase your name out of the book.” Are you not glad of that? Of course, we do not know if you are in yet.

The question is, “Will the kingdom of God continue or is there some nebulous thing, where we just sit on white clouds the rest of our life?” The kingdom of God is going to continue. That beautiful city will continue, and there will be no more sickness, sin, suffering, death, and sorrow. All tears will be wiped away. All things will be brand new forever and ever. Amen.

The last prayer of the Bible is, “even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Father, we thank You for the privilege that we have had to study the person and work of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It would be sad to think a student sat in here all semester and yet has never bowed the knee to Him or confessed that He is Lord.

It is easy for us to go along and pick up all the nomenclature and do everything that we think Christians are supposed to do, but in our hearts be characterized by what Jesus said to religious leaders of His day: “Your heart is far from Me.” None of us want to hear Him say, “Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity; I never knew you.” I pray that learning about our blessed Lord has drawn us to a new appreciation that the central fact of all of Christianity is Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Everything else pales into insignificance in the light of His glory, majesty and soon return. Lord, I pray that this will make a difference in the way we live: in our witnessing and in our walk before others. Thank You, Lord, for what You have done, for giving us this opportunity to just look into Your word and examine these great doctrines. Where good people disagree, help us, Lord, to be agreeable. To agree to disagree and still love each other when it is a non-essential. Help us also to stand firm when it is an essential of salvation. Thank You, Lord, for all You have done. Bless the students as they continue to finish up this semester. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

CHRISTOLOGY

Doctrine of Jesus Christ

GENERAL OUTLINE:

- 1A. The PREEEXISTENCE of Jesus Christ
- 2A. The MESSIANIC CLAIMS of Jesus Christ
- 3A. The DIETY of Jesus Christ
- 4A. The INCARNATION and VIRGIN BIRTH of Jesus Christ
- 5A. The HUMANITY of Jesus Christ
- 6A. The MIRACLES of Jesus Christ
- 7A. The DEATH of Jesus Christ
- 8A. The RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ
- 9A. The ASCENSION and PRESENT MINISTRY of Jesus Christ
- 10A. The SECOND COMING of Jesus Christ

THE PREEXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST

John 1:1, 14; Colossians 1:15-19

1A. HIS POSITION OVER ALL CREATION

Colossians 1:15 - "the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of every creature"

1B. He is the REVELATION of the Invisible God

John 1:18; I Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:27

"invisible" - used 5 times (Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15-16;
I Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:27)

2B. He is the complete REPRESENTATION of the invisible God "image" = copy

NOTE: Every image is a likeness, but every likeness is not an image -
cf. Matthew 22:20

cf. John 14:8-9; II Corinthians 4:4; Hebrews 1:3

3B. He is the special REASON for the creation - "firstborn" (Greek - **prototokos** - used 9 times)

cf. Romans 8:29 - not from the standpoint of time - Jesus Christ was not
born first among all the believers!

cf. Psalm 2:7-8; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation- 22:8-9

2A. HIS POWER TO CREATE ALL THINGS

John 1:3; Colossians 1:16

3A. HIS PROVIDENCE IN CONTROLLING ALL THINGS

Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3

4A. HIS PRESENCE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

(four evidences)

- 1B. The UNIQUENESS of THE ANGEL OF THE LORD
- term "the Angel of the Lord" - appears 50 times
- term "the Angel of God" - appears 5 times
- Examples: (cf. Psalm 34:7; 35:5-6; Zechariah 12:8)
- 1C. To **HAGAR** - Genesis 16:7-13; 21:17-20
- 2C. To **ABRAHAM** - Genesis 22:11, 15-18
- 3C. To **MOSES** - Exodus 3:1-6; 14:19
- 4C. To **BALAAM** - Numbers 22:20-35
- 5C. To the **CHILDREN OF ISRAEL** - Judges 2:1-5
- 6C. To **GIDEON** - Judges 6:11-24
- 7C. To **MANAOH & HIS WIFE** - Judges 13:2-3, 6-9, 15-22
- 2B. The UNDERSTANDING of THE LORD OF HOSTS
- used 236 times
- 1C. He is the **REDEEMER** - Isaiah 44:6; 47:4; 59:28
- 2C. He is the **KING** - Isaiah 6:3, 5
- 3C. He is the **GOD** of the armies of Israel - I Samuel 17:45
- 4C. He is the **COMMANDER** of the army of the Lord - Joshua 5:13-15;
6:2
- 3B. The USE of plural pronouns - Gen. 1:26; 11:5-9; Isaiah 6:8
- 4B. The UNITY of N.T. writers - John 1:1-2, 14-15; 6:51, 62; 8:58; 17:5, 24;
Phil. 2:5-7; Col. 1:17
- 5A. HIS PREEMINENCE OVER ALL THINGS - Ephesians 1:28-23; Colossians
1:18-19

THE MESSIANIC CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST

John 20:31-31

The word "Messiah" appears in the English Bible in just one passage - Daniel 9:25-26; the word "Christ" appears 555 times. The Hebrew word, mashiyach, appears 39 times in the Old Testament, and refers to an "anointed one." References to the Messiah include Psalm 2:2 and Daniel 9:25-26. The N.T. Greek word, **christos**, appears 569 times.

- 1A. THE MESSIAH IS THE SEED OF THE WOMAN - Genesis 3:15
cf. Matthew 1:16, 18
- 2A. THE MESSIAH IS FROM THE LINE OF SHEM - Genesis 9:26 "Shem"- "name"
- Semitic peoples - people of the name
- 3A. THE MESSIAH IS THE SEED OF ABRAHAM - Genesis 12:1-3, 7; Matthew
1:1; Galatians 3:8, 14, 16
- 4A. THE MESSIAH IS THE SEED OF ISAAC NOT ISHMAEL - Genesis 17:18-21;
21:12; Hebrews 11:17-19
- 5A. THE MESSIAH IS FROM THE LINE OF JACOB, NOT ESAU - Numbers
24:17-19
- 6A. THE MESSIAH IS FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH - Genesis 49:10; Matthew
1:2; Hebrews 7:14-17
- 7A. THE MESSIAH IS FROM THE FAMILY OF JESSE - Isaiah 11:1-5, 18; Romans
15:12
- 8A. THE MESSIAH IS FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID - II Sam. 7:12-13; Psalm
89:20-29, 35-36; 132:11; Matt. 1:1; Romans 1:3; Rev. 5:5; 22:16 (Jesse had eight
sons - David is selected - I Sam. 16:6-13)
- 9A. THE MESSIAH WILL COME FROM THE LINE OF SOLOMON DAVID'S
SON - I Chronicles 22:9-10; 28:4-5 (David had at least 17 children - God chose
Solomon, the son of David & Bathsheba)

- 10A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM, THE CITY OF DAVID - Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-11; Luke 2:1-14
- 11A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE BORN OF A VIRGIN - Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23
- 12A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE BORN BEFORE THE TRIBE OF JUDAH LOSES ITS TRIBAL IDENTITY - Genesis 49:18; Luke 21:210-24
- 13A. THE MESSIAH MUST COME WHILE THE SECOND TEMPLE IS STILL STANDING - Zechariah 11:12-13; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 27:3-10
- 14A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE CUT OFF BEFORE THE SECOND TEMPLE IS DESTROYED - Daniel 9:24-27
- 15A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE A PROPHET - Deut. 18:18; Luke 4:16-30; 7:11-16; Acts 3:19-26
- 16A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE A PRIEST - Psalm 118:1-4; Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:5-6; 6:20; 7:14-171, 26-8:1
- 17A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE A JUDGE - Psalm 50:1-6; 67:3-4; 72:1-4; 75:1 -18; 82:1 -8; 97:8 -9; 98:7-9; Matt. 25:31 -32; John 5:22; Romans 14:18-12; 1 Cor. 4:5; II Cor. 5:18; James 5:9; Rev. 19:11
- 18A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE KING - Psalm 2; 24:7-10; Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:4-11; John 12:12-16; 18:33-38; 19:14-22; 1 Tim. 6:13-16; Revelation 11:15; 19:16
- 19A. THE MESSIAH WILL DO MIRACLES OF HEALING - Isa. 35:4-6; 53:4; Matthew 8:16-17; John 26:38-31
- 20A. THE MESSIAH WILL SAVE US FROM OUR SINS - Isa. 43:11, 25; 44:22-24; 45:21-22; 53:1-12
- 21A. THE MESSIAH WILL BE RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD - Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:24-32

THE DIETY OF JESUS CHRIST

John 1: 1 -18; I Timothy 3:16

1A. HIS NAMES PROVE THAT HE IS GOD!

- 1B. He is called "**GOD**" - John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 29:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; I John 5:28 cf. Isaiah 9:6
- 2B. He Is called the "**SON OF GOD**" - refers to position, not origin (word for "born one" In Greek, **teknon**, is never used of Jesus Christ) - cf. John 5:18; 10:30-36; 19:7
- 3B. He is called the "**LORD**" (Greek - **kurios**) - used in LXX for the Hebrew YAHWEH (Jehovah) - Isaiah 45:22-23; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21-36; Romans 10:9-10; Philippians 2:5-11
- 4B. He is called the "**LORD OF GLORY**" - Psa. 24:7-10; 1 Cor. 2:8
- 5B. He is called the "**HOLY ONE**" - Isa. 48:17; Acts 3:14
- 6B. He is called "**THE FIRST AND THE LAST**" - Isa. 44:6; 48:12-16; Rev. 1: 17-18; 2:8; 22:12-13, 16
- 7B. He is called the "**LORD OF HOSTS**" - Isaiah 44:6 (Hebrew word is YAHWEH not adonai)

2A. HIS ATTRIBUTES PROVE THAT HE IS GOD!

- 1B. He is **ETERNAL** - Isaiah 9:6; 1 John 5:11
- 2B. He Is **UNCHANGABLE** - Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:8-12; 13:8
- 3B. He Is **OMNIPRESENT** - Matthew 18:28; 28:20; Colossians 3:11
- 4B. He Is **OMNISCIENT** - John 2:23-25; 16:38; Colossians 2:3
- 5B. He Is **OMNIPOTENT** - Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 1:8; 22:12-13
- 6B. He is **PERFECT** - Colossians 1: 19; 2:9-10

Christology—David Hocking
Appendix A

7B. He is **INCOMPREHENSIBLE** - Isaiah 9:6; 55:8-9; Matthew 11:27;
Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 3:8, 19

3A. HIS ABILITIES PROVE THAT HE IS GOD!

1B. He **CREATED** all things - John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1:16

2B. He **CONTROLS** all things - Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:2-3

3B. He **CURES** all diseases - Matthew 4:23-24

4B. He **CALMS** the sea - Mark 6:47-51

5B. He **CONQUERS** death - John 11:25-26

6B. He **CLAIMS** to forgive sins, answer prayer, and give eternal life - Mark
2:1-12; John 10:27-33; 14:13-14

THE INCARNATION AND VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1-14

- 1A. THE MEANING OF THE INCARNATION - that divine act by which the second Person of the triune God became human flesh.

cf. John 1:14; Romans 8:3; Philippians 2:7-8; I Timothy 3:16

- 2A. THE METHOD BY WHICH JESUS CHRIST BECAME INCARNATE the virgin birth - Galatians 4:4

- 1B. **PROPHECIES** in the Old Testament
Genesis 3:15 cf. I Timothy 2:12-15
Isaiah 7:14 cf. Matthew 1:23
Isaiah 9:6-7 cf. Luke 1:31-35

almah - Hebrew word in Isaiah 7:14, translated into Greek by the word **parthenos** in LXX. The grammar reads, "Behold, THE virgin is bearing a son and she calls his name Immanuel."

Jewish scholars list 456 references to the Messiah, but Isaiah 7:14 is not one of them!

- 2B. **PROBLEMS** in the genealogies (Matthew 1 & Luke 3)
cf. Jeremiah 22:24-30 and II Samuel 7:12; Psalm 132:11

- 3B. **PROCLAMATIONS** concerning the virgin birth

- 1C. He is **SINLESS** - "that Holy thing" - Luke 1:35
cf. Isaiah 6:1-8 and John 12:41
cf. II Corinthians 5:2 1; Hebrews 4:15

- 1D. **PROTECTED** by the virgin birth

2D. **PRODUCED** by the Holy Spirit - Matt. 1:20; Lk. 1:35

3D. **PROVED** by His life - John 8:45-47; 19:4, 6

4D. **PROCLAIMED** by His followers:

1E. Peter - Acts 3:14; I Peter 2:22

2E. Stephen - Acts 7:52

3E. John - I John 3:5

4E. Paul - Hebrews 7:26

2C. He is **SPECIAL** - "the Son of the Highest" - Lk. 1:32 and "the Son of God" - Lk. 1:35

NOTE: He is the "Son" of God, not the "daughter" of God. According to genetic law, the virgin conception of Mary should have produced a daughter, not a son. The human male determines the sex of the offspring. His entrance into the unfertilized egg of Mary caused it to develop without the expected duplication of the female X chromosomes. When an unfertilized egg duplicates its chromosomes in response to artificial stimulation, the result is female (animal studies). There is no indication that God fertilized the egg of Mary through the work of either the Father or the Spirit. She conceived without human or divine fertilization when God the Son entered not only her womb, but also the egg in her womb, under the superintending ministry of the Holy Spirit.

cf. John 1: 14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 4:19 - "only-begotten"
cf. Hebrews 11: 17-18

Angels are sons of God by creation;
Believers are sons of God by adoption;
Jesus Christ is the Son of God by His eternal relationship
to the Father!

- 3C. He is **SOVEREIGN** - "He will be great" - Lk 1:32-33
cf. Psalm 145:3; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6;
Zechariah 14:9, 16

NOTE: The legal right to the throne (David's son, Solomon) comes through Joseph who is in the line of Solomon. The physical right to be the son of David, according to Psalm 132:11, is through Mary, who is in the line of David through his son, Nathan.

- 4C. He is **SUPERNATURAL (GOD)** - "Immanuel: God with us"
Matthew 1:23 cf. Isaiah 7:14
cf. I Timothy 3:16

cf. Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 14; 20:28; Acts 28:28;
Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20

- 5C. He is **SALVATION** - "a Savior, which is Christ the Lord"
cf. Luke 2:11 and Matt. 1:25
cf. Isaiah 43:1-7, 10-13; 44:6; Rev. 22:13, 16

3A. THE MANNER IN WHICH HIS POSITION AND STATE WERE CHANGED

- 1B. A change in His dwelling place - John 6:51
2B. A change in His possessions - Luke 9:58; II Cor. 8:9
3B. A change in His glory - John 1: 10, 14; 17:5
4B. A change in His position - Matt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6-7
5B. A change in His form - Phil. 2:6-7

NOTE: There was no change in His divine personality. He did not cease to be God when He became man - Hebrews 13:8

4A. THE MOTIVES BEHIND THE INCARNATION

- 1B. That He might die for sinners, and thus save them from their sins - Luke 19:18; Hebrews 2:9
- 2B. That He might share with men His own eternal life John 6:47-51; 18: 10 - 11
- 3B. That as God He might know human life by personal experience (two reasons):
 - 1C. That He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest -Hebrews 2:17-18
 - 2C. That He might be our Judge - John 5:22, 27
- 4B. That He might reveal In Himself the ideal humanity I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6; 3:2
- 5B. That He might provide for us an everlasting revelation of Himself in visible human form - John 1:18; 14:9; 20:29; Colossians 1:15

5A. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TEACHING - I John 4:1-3; II John 7-11

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

John 1:1-2, 14; Philippians 2:5-11

THREE ISSUES INVOLVED:

1A. HIS PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

1B. He became flesh - John 1: 14; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14

2B. He was a baby - Luke 2:12, 16

3B. He experienced normal physical growth - Luke 2:40, 52

4B. His resurrection involved a real physical body -
Luke 24:39-43

2A. HIS PHYSICAL DESIRES

1B. He was hungry - Matthew 4:2; Mark 11:12

2B. He was asleep - Matthew 8:24; Mark 4:38

3B. He was tempted by the devil - Matthew 4:1; Hebrews 4:15

4B. He was tired - John 4:6

5B. He was thirsty - John 19:28

6B. He experienced physical agony - Luke 22:44

7B. He cried and shed tears - John 11:35; Hebrews 5:7

3A. HIS PHYSICAL DEATH - John 19:28-42; Colossians 1:21-22; Hebrews 2:9, 14, 17-10; 1 Peter 2:24; 3: 18

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST

John 21:25

cf. John 2:11, 23; 6:2; 7:31; 9:16; 11:47; 12:37; Acts 2:22

1A. HE HAD POWER OVER CREATION John 2:1-11

1B. He is the CREATOR!
John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1: 16

2B. He is the SUSTAINER!
Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:2-3

2A. HE HAD POWER OVER DISEASE!
Matthew 4:23-25; John 4:46-54

3A. HE HAD POWER OVER BIRTH DEFECTS!
John 5:1-9

4A. HE HAD POWER OVER FOOD SUPPLY!
John 6:1-14

5A. HE HAD POWER OVER NATURE!
Luke 8:22-25; John 6:16-21

6A. HE HAD POWER OVER BLINDNESS!
Matthew 20:29-34; John 9:1-38

7A. HE HAD POWER OVER DEATH!
John 5:21, 25-29; 11:1-4, 17-27, 38-45

SUMMARY: John 20:38-31

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 27:27-54

1A. WHY DID JESUS DIE?

- 1B. TO DO THE WILL OF GOD - Hebrews 10:7-14
- 2B. TO SAVE LOST SINNERS - Matthew 9:13; Luke 19:10;
I Timothy 1: 15
- 3B. TO FULFILL THE LAW - Matthew 5:17; Romans 10:4
- 4B. TO REDEEM THOSE WHO ARE UNDER THE LAW -
Galatians 3:13-14, 24; 4:4-5; 1 Peter 1:18-19
- 5B. TO DEMONSTRATE GOD IS RIGHTEOUSNESS -
Romans 3:24-26; II Corinthians 5:21
- 6B. TO MANIFEST GOD'S LOVE TO US - John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John
3:16; 4:9-18
- 7B. TO BRING US TO GOD - Hebrews 2:9-10; I Peter 3:18
- 8B. TO DESTROY THE DEVIL'S POWER - Hebrews 2:14-15
- 9B. TO BE A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST - Hebrews 2:17-
18; 4:14-16
- 10B. TO SERVE AND GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM - Matthew 28:28; I
Timothy 2:5-6

Christology—David Hocking
Appendix A

- 11B. TO RECONCILE US TO GOD - Romans 5:9-11; II Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 1:20-22
- 12B. TO BEAR OUR SINS - Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24
- 13B. TO TAKE AWAY OUR SINS - John 1:29; Hebrews 9:26; 10:4, 10-12; I John 3:5
- 14 B. TO FORGIVE US OF OUR SINS - Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 2:13-14; I John 1:9
- 15B. TO GIVE US ETERNAL LIFE - John 3:14-16; 10:10, 27-29; I John 5:6-13

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 28:1-20; I Corinthians 15:12-23

SEVEN REASONS TO BELIEVE:

1A. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

1B. Based on sound **EVIDENCE**, not hearsay or fairy tales!

Testimony of Lord Lyndhurst (1772-1963 A.D.), recognized as one of the greatest legal minds in British history: "I know pretty well what evidence is; and I tell you, such evidence as that for the Resurrection has never broken down yet."

2B. Based on many **EYEWITNESSES!**
cf. Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3

2A. THE ABSENCE OF THE BODY OF JESUS FROM A CLOSELY GUARDED TOMB

1B. It was **SHOCKING** to the Romans - a great embarrassment! Matthew 27:62-66 (They could not produce the body!)

2B. It was **STARTLING** to the women - Matt. 28:5-8; Mk- 16:8

3B. It was **SURPRISING** to the disciples - they did not believe it!
Mark 16:14; Luke 24:18-11

3A. THE ATTEMPT OF THE SANHEDRIN TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAD HAPPENED

- They never questioned the report of the guard; they never even checked it out; they knew they would not have been there if it had not happened! What about the grave clothes? They were still there to be examined.
cf. Matthew 28:11-15

4A. THE ACTIONS OF THE APOSTLES AFTER THE RESURRECTION - their lives were changed!

1B. There was a definite **CHANGE** In their attitude and response
- they all forsook Him at the cross and fled (Matt. 26:56)
- they did not believe He would rise from the dead (Luke 24:9-11)

2B. There was a new **COURAGE** In their witness after the resurrection - they were beaten, jailed, and killed for what they now believed! cf. Acts 5:40-42; 12:1-2

5A. THE APPEARANCES OF JESUS CHRIST AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

1B. They were **EXTENDED** over a period of 40 days - Acts 1:3

2B. They were **EVIDENCED** by many different people and situations - I Corinthians 15:1-8

3B. His body was **EXAMINED** carefully by the apostles - Luke 24:36-43; I John 1:1

6A. THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE GARDEN TOMB IN JERUSALEM IS THE PLACE WHERE JESUS WAS BURIED

1B. As to its **LOCATION** - John 19:41-42

2B. As to Its **DESIGN** - Matthew 27:68

3B. As to its **USAGE** - Matthew 27:68; John 19:41

4B. As to its **STONE** - Mark 16:4

7A. THE ASSURANCE IN THE BELIEVER'S HEART - I John 5:6-13

THE ASCENSION AND PRESENT MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

Acts 1:9-11; 2:32-36; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:19-23; 4:8-10;
Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 7*25; 10:12

1A. THE PLACE WHERE HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

Luke 24:50 - "as far as to Bethany"

Acts 1:12 - "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey"

2A. THE POSITION HE NOW HAS IN HEAVEN

Ephesians 4:8 - "ascended up an high"

Ephesians 4:10 - "ascended up far above all heavens"

Acts 2:33 - "by the right hand of God exalted"

Acts 2:34 - "into the heavens"

Acts 7:55-56 - "standing on the right hand of God"

Romans 8:34 - "at the right hand of God"

Ephesians 1:20 - "at his own right hand in the heavenly places"

Colossians 3:1 - "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"

Hebrews 1:3 - "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"

Hebrews 8:1 - "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty In the heavens"

Hebrews 18:12 - "sat down on the right hand of God"

Hebrews 12:2 - "set down at the right hand of the throne of God"

I Peter 3:22 - "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God"

1B. His position reflects God's **AUTHORITY** - "right hand"

2B. His position reflects God's **APPROVAL** - "by the right hand of God exalted"

3B. His position reflects His **ACCOMPLISHMENT** - "sat down" (priests never sat down - work was never finished!)

3A. THE PURPOSE OF HIS ASCENSION AND PRESENT MINISTRY

- 1B. His **EXALTATION** - Acts 2:33; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11
- 2B. His **INTERCESSION** - Romans 8:34; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:24-25
- 3B. His **PREPARATION** - John 14:1-3
- 4B. His **FULLNESS** as Head of the Church - Ephesians 1:20-23;
4:7-10; Colossians 1: 19-19; 2:9-10
- 5B. His **EXPECTATION** - I Cor. 15:24-28; Hebrews 18:12-13
cf. Acts 2:33-35

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 1:5-12; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:7, 12, 20

1A. THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING

- 1B. **GIVEN** by Jesus Christ Himself - John 14:3
- 2B. **GUARANTEED** by the two men in white apparel - Acts 1:9-11
- 3B. **GROUND**ED in the predictions of the apostles who wrote the New Testament:
 - 1C. Paul - I Thess. 4:16-17
 - 2C. Peter - I Peter 1:6-8; II Peter 3:1-13
 - 3C. James - James 5:7-8
 - 4C. John - I John 3:1-3
 - 5C. Matthew - Matthew 24:29-30
 - 6C. Mark - Mark 13:26
 - 7C. Luke - 21:27-28

2A. THE PROBLEM OF HIS COMING AS IT RELATES TO TIME AND PLACE

- 1B. The **PLACE** - Isaiah 63:1-6; Zech. 14:4 cf. I Thess. 4:16-17
- 2B. The **POSITION** of His coming in relation to the tribulation - I Thess. 4:16-5:9 cf. Matthew 24:29-30
 - 1C. Before the tribulation
 - 2C. During the tribulation

- 3C. After the tribulation
- 3B. The **PLACE** of His coming in relation to the millennium - Revelation 20:1-6
 - 1C. **A-MILLENNIALISM**- no millennium
 - 2C. **POST-MILLENNIALISM** - comes after the millennium
 - 3C. **PRE-MILLENNIALISM** - before the millennium
- 3A. THE POWER OF HIS COMING
 - 1B. At the **RAPTURE**, (BEFORE THE TRIBULATION)
 - 1C. The **resurrection** of dead believers - I Cor. 15:35-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-17
 - 2C. The **removal** of living believers - I Thess. 4:16-17
 - 3C. The **renovation** of the physical body - Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:1-3
 - 2B. At the **REVELATION**: (AFTER THE TRIBULATION)
 - 1C. The **resurrection** of O.T. and tribulation saints - Daniel 12:1-3; Revelation 7:14-17; 15:1-2; 20:4-6
 - 2C. The **redemption** of Israel - Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25-27
 - 3C. The **revenge** of God against all nations who come against His people - Joel 3:9-17; Zechariah 12:8-9; 14:1-3; II Thess. 1:5-9; Revelation 19:2, 15-21
 - 4C. The **rule and reign** of Jesus Christ over all the earth -Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 11:15; 28:1-6