

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

(CHRISTOLOGY)

A Look at What the Bible Says by
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THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

1. INTRODUCTION

The doctrine that God wants taught in His churches does not consist of opinions distilled from Scripture, but of the actual words of Scripture given to us, **“Line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little”** (Isaiah 28:10). Therefore, we teach that Christ is both true God and true man because the Bible tells in one place that He is true God, and in another place that He is true man. For example, the words **“We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, so that we might know the one who is true, and we are in the one who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and eternal life,”** tell us that Christ is God (1John 5:20). At the same time, the words, **“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”** tell us that He is true man (1Timothy 2:5). Because God has given us both of those truths, He wants us to teach both without compromising them in a vain attempt to make them more palatable to our sin-corrupted little finite minds. For that reason we reject as false every attempt to deny Christ’s deity, or His humanity, or to separate His divine nature from His human nature as if He were two beings.

The Bible tells us that, **“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (1Corinthians 15:1-4). And, because He died for our sins we have been, **“Reconciled to God by the death of His Son... by whom we have now received the atonement”** (Romans 5:10-11). That good news is the foundation of our faith. Faith is believing that we are, **“Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 3:24). And it is, **“By faith we have access into this grace wherein we stand”** (Romans 5:2). For that reason, the doctrine of the atonement cannot be separated from the doctrine that, **“A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”** (Romans 3:28). Together those two doctrines are the central truth of Scripture. [See 1Corinthians 3:11, 1Timothy 2:5-6.]

2. THE TRUE DEITY OF CHRIST

The words, **“In the beginning was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”** tell us that Christ is God (John 1:1). The book of John goes on to tell us that, **“All things were created by Him; and apart from Him nothing was created that was created”** (verse 3), and that, **“The Word [the Creator] was made flesh, and dwelt among us”** (verse 14). The Bible goes on to testify to Christ’s deity by ascribing to Him:

- a) **The Name God.** — The words, “**Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government will be on His shoulders: and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father,**” tell us that Christ is, “**God**” (Isaiah 9:6). So do the words, “**We are in the one who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and eternal life**” (1John 5:20). The words, “**Peter answered and said, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,**” tell us that Christ is the “**Son**” of God. And, the words, “**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,**” tell us that Christ is not an adopted son of God, but is the “**only begotten**” Son (John 1:14). In the book of Hebrews we read, “**To which of the angels did God ever say, You are my Son, today I have begotten you?... But to the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever**” (Hebrews 1:5,8). And, speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, God said, “**Behold, the days come, says the LORD, when I will raise to David a righteous Branch... and this is the name by which He will be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).
- b) **Divine attributes.** — The words, “**Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I tell you, Before Abraham was, I am,**” and the words, “**O Father, glorify me at your side with the glory that I had with you before the world was,**” ascribe to Christ the divine attribute of eternity (John 8:58 and 17:5). Peter’s words, “**Lord, you know all things,**” ascribe to Christ the attribute of omniscience (John 21:17). And, the words, “**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give to them eternal life; and they will never perish, neither will any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than anyone; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one,**” ascribe omnipotence to Him (John 10:28-30).
- c) **Divine works.** — The words, “**For all things in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible, were created by him,**” tell us that Christ is the creator of all things (Colossians 1:16). The words, “**Just as the Father raises the dead, and gives them life; even so the Son gives life to whomever He will**” and the words, “**The hour is coming, in which all who are in the graves will hear His [Christ’s] voice, and will come out;**” tell us that Christ raises the dead (John 5:21 and 28). And, the words, “**This the first of miracles was performed by Jesus,**” tells us that Jesus has the power to perform miracles (John 2:11).
- d) **Divine adoration and worship.** — The words, “**Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God,**” tell us that Thomas honored Christ as God

(John 20:28). The words, **“The Father does not judge anyone, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him,”** tell us that we should honor Christ in the same way we honor God (John 5:22-23). The words, **“God has also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,”** tell us that God wants us to bow before Christ (Philippians 2:9-10). And, the words, **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being by nature God, did not see equality with God as something to be used for self-glorification, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the nature of a servant, and was born as a man,”** tell us that Christ is by nature God (Philippians 2:5-7).

3. THE TRUE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

One of Satan’s first attacks on Christianity was a denial of Christ’s humanity. Those who held that heresy acknowledged that Christ was God, but claimed that He was a phantom person who did not have a body of flesh and blood. However, if Christ did not have blood, then His blood could never cleanse “us from all sin” (1John 1:7). That heresy arose at the time of the Apostles, and the Bible condemns it. The words, **“Do not believe every spirit... because many false prophets have gone out into the world... Every spirit who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist,”** tell us to regard those who deny Christ’s humanity as antichrists (1John 4:1,3). The words, **“Those who know God accept what we say; those who are not of God will not accept what we say,”** tell us that those who deny Christ’s humanity are “not of God” (1John 4:6). That heresy is again condemned in the words, **“Many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not admit that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Such is a deceiver and an antichrist. Beware of them, so that you do not lose the things that we worked for, but receive your reward in full. Whoever transgresses, and does not continue in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God... Do not receive him into your house, or bid him God speed, for he who bids him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds”** (2John 7-11).

That denial of Christ’s humanity was dangerous, and a serious attack on the Gospel, because a phantom Christ could never feel pain, and, therefore, could never truly suffer or die for our sins. The Muslim denial that Christ died on the cross merits the same condemnation, for it also undermines the Gospel.

Throughout history Satan has inspired a multitude of other attacks on what the Bible says about Christ’s humanity. Some have denied that Christ had a human soul, others that He had a human will, others have claimed that He was not truly human, but brought His body from heaven. None of those views come from the Bible, but are

fantasies dreamed up by a heart that is, “Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). That holds true for all of the other stories invented to get around what the Bible says. Of such fantasies Dr. John Theodore Mueller had this to say:

In whatever matter Holy Scripture has definitely spoken the Christian theologian must suppress his own views, opinions, and speculations and adhere unwaveringly to the divine truths revealed in Holy Scripture. In no case is he permitted to inject into the body of divine truth his own *figments and fabrications*, and at no time must he allow his reason the prerogative of doubt, criticism, or denial, but every thought must everywhere be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2Corinthians 10:5. [*Christian Dogmatics*. (Page 39)]

In testifying to Christ’s humanity the Bible ascribes to Him: a) manhood, b) human flesh, c) human descent, d) human (though miraculous) conception in the womb, e) human constituent parts, f) human emotions, g) human physical wants, h) human suffering and death.

- a) **Manhood:** The words, **“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”** say that Christ is a man (1Timothy 2:5); as do the words, **“But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth”** (John 8:40).
- b) **Human flesh:** The words, **“Since the children have flesh and blood, He in the same way took on flesh and blood; so that through His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil,”** tell us that He had human flesh (Hebrews 2:14); as do the words, **“Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is really me: handle me, and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see me have”** (Luke 24:39).
- c) **Human descent:** The words, **“For they are Israelites... and of them as concerning the flesh Christ came,”** tell us that Christ was an Israelite “as concerning the flesh” (Romans 9:4-5). The words, **“The lineage of Jesus Christ, the descendant of David, the descendant of Abraham,”** say the same thing (Matthew 1:1). When the Bible says, **“The promises were made to Abraham and his seed. God did not say, And to your seeds, as referring to many; but, And to your seed, referring to one which is Christ,”** it is telling us that Christ was a descendant (seed) of Abraham (Galatians 3:16, see Genesis 22:18). The Bible goes on to tell us that Jesus was the descendant (seed) of Eve, Isaac, Mary and David as well as Abraham (see John 7:42, Genesis 3:15, Hebrews 2:16, 2Timothy 2:8, Romans 9:7, Romans 1:3, and Luke 1:31).

- d) **Human (though miraculous) conception:** The words, “**You will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and will name him JESUS,**” tell us that Mary conceived Christ in her Womb (Luke 1:31). And, Elisabeth’s words to Mary, “**Blessed is the fruit of your womb,**” tell us that Jesus was the fruit of Mary’s womb (Luke 1:42). [See Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23.]
- e) **Human constituent parts:** The words, “**But He was speaking of the temple of His body,**” tell us that Christ has a body (John 2:21). The words, “**He said to them, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow,**” tell us that He has a soul (Matthew 26:38). The words, “**Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is really me: handle me, and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see me have,**” tell us that He has hands, feet, flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). The words, “**When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,**” tell us that He has a spirit (Luke 23:46). And, the words, “**Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done,**” tell us that He has a will (Luke 22:42).
- f) **Human emotions:** The words, “**After looking around at them in anger, being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts,**” tell us that Jesus felt anger and grief (Mark 3:5). And, the words, “**Jesus... said to them, My soul is extremely sorrowful,**” tell us that He experienced sorrow (Mark 14:34).
- g) **Human physical wants:** The words, “**After fasting for forty days and forty nights, He was hungry,**” tell us that Jesus experienced hunger (Matthew 4:2). The words, “**Jesus, knowing that all was now complete, said, I thirst,**” tell us that Jesus experienced thirst (John 19:28). And, the words, “**As they were sailing He fell asleep,**” tell us that He grew tired (Luke 8:23).
- h) **Human suffering and death:** Because of His great suffering Jesus called out, “**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**” (Matthew 27:46). And, the words, “**Jesus said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost,**” tell us that Jesus died (John 19:30). The words, “**Christ physically suffered for us,**” and “**Christ died for our sins,**” also tell us that He suffered and died (1Peter 4:1, 1Corinthians 15:3).

Over the centuries Satan has inspired a multitude of heresies aimed at undermining what the Bible says about Christ’s humanity. However, all of those heresies contradict something in the Bible. For example, the claim that Christ brought His body with Him from heaven not only contradicts all of the passages that tell us that Christ is the descendant (seed) of Eve, Abraham, David and Mary, or “The Son

of man” (Matthew 9:6), it also contradicts all of the passages that tell us Christ was conceived by Mary (or a virgin). Isaiah wrote, **“A virgin will conceive”** (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23). The angel said to Mary, **“You will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and will name him JESUS,”** and there is a big difference between conceiving a child and having one implanted in the womb (Luke 1:31). In fact, when Mary asked the angel, **“How can this be, since I have never been intimate with a man?”** he said, **“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you, therefore the holy one who will be born of you will be called the Son of God”** (Luke 1:34-35). Those words suggest that when Mary conceived, God created the genetic material that would have been supplied by the male sperm (including the Y chromosome), but even that is conjecture, not something that the Bible says. Moreover, that sort of conjecture leads more conjecture, like the question of whether God created that genetic material from Mary’s egg, or from nothing. And, that leads us further and further from God’s Word. For that reason conjecture should never be taught as doctrine, and should never be used to deny Christ’s humanity. God wants us to teach what His word says, not what we imagine.

“Those who know God accept what we [the inspired writers of Scripture] say, those who are not of God will not accept what we say. That is how we can distinguish the spirit of truth from the spirit of error” (1John 4:6).

Furthermore, because the words, **“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,”** tell us that Christ took our humanity (flesh and blood) upon Himself in order defeat Satan, those who deny that He was truly human call into question the atonement. As it is written, **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law”** (Gal4:4-5). **“Surely He has taken on himself our pains, and carried our sorrows: yet we regarded him as condemned, struck down by God, and afflicted, but He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed”** (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Those who argue that miracles such as a virgin birth are impossible because they would violate the “laws of nature” are extremely foolish. They are foolish because intelligent beings override the laws of nature all of the time. The laws of nature will never assemble wood, steel and plaster into a house. On the contrary, the laws of nature will cause a house to decay and fall apart. As intelligent beings, we cause the wood, steel and plaster to do what they never would do on their own. And, if we can override the laws of nature so can God! [See Luke 1:34-35.]

The words, **“Behold, I was formed in iniquity; and sinful when my mother conceived me,”** the words, **“Just as sin entered the world by one man, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned:”** and the words, **“We all... were by nature the children of wrath,”** tell us that all men born in the natural way are sinners (Psalm 51:5, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:3). However, because of His virgin birth, Christ is without sin. As it is written, **“He committed no sin, nor was deceit ever found in His mouth”** (1Peter 2:22). Likewise, the words, **“The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,”** the words, **“God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us,”** the words, **“He had not committed any crime, nor was any deceit in His mouth,”** and the words, **“The holy one who will be born of you will be called the Son of God,”** all tell us that Christ is without sin (1Peter 1:19, 2Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 53:9, Luke 1:35). And, He can be without sin, while still being truly human because sin is not a part of human nature, but a corruption of it. [**Compare** Genesis 1:31, **“God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,”** with Jeremiah 17:9, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”**.] Even though Christ as true man was subject to the law, the words, **“The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day,”** reveal that He was by nature above the Law.

The words, **“I am the LORD, I do not change,”** tell us that God never changes (Malachi 3:6). Therefore, when Christ became man, God did not change. Instead, the words, **“Since the children have flesh and blood, He in the same way took on flesh and blood,”** and the words, **“Took upon him the nature of a servant, and was born as a man,”** tell us that without changing His nature, God took on flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14). That is why the Athanasian Creed says that Christ, **“While being both God and Man is not two individuals or two Christs, but one individual, one Christ. One, not by conversion of Deity into flesh, but by taking manhood into God; One altogether; not by mixing divinity with humanity, but by uniting the two in one person”**.

Because Christ is both true God and true man united in one person, He is both the branch that came out of David, and God. As it is written, **“I will raise to David a righteous Branch... and this is the name by which He will be called, The LORD [Jahweh] Our Righteousness”** (Jeremiah 23:5-6). **“All the fullness of God dwells in Christ bodily”** (Colossians 2:9). [See John 14:9.]

4. THE PERSONAL UNION

The words, **“Great is the mystery of godliness: God was revealed in the flesh,”** tell us that the truth of Christ’s incarnation is a mystery (1Timothy 3:16). And, because it is a mystery, man’s puny finite sin corrupted mind will never be able to fully understand it (Jeremiah 17:9). For that reason, what God has revealed in

Scripture must either be fully accepted or fully rejected. Made up explanations and compromise positions are not acceptable, for it is written, **“No truth of scripture comes from any private explanation”** (2Peter 1:20). There are only two choices, the way of Christian faith, or the way of pagan unbelief.

The words, **“Can anyone hide himself in a secret place where I will not see him? asks the LORD. Don’t I fill heaven and earth? asks the LORD,”** and the words, **“In Him we live, and move, and have our being,”** tell us that God is present everywhere, including in all of creation (Jeremiah 23:24, Acts 17:28). However, when it comes to believers the Bible also tells us that God is present with them in a special way. As it is written, **“If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him”** // **“Don’t you know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”** // **“He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him”** (John 14:23, 1Corinthians 3:16 and 6:17). In contrast, the union of Christ’s human nature with His divine nature goes far beyond God’s presence. In Christ God and man are permanently united. The words, **“I will raise to David a righteous Branch... and this is the name by which He will be called, The LORD (Jahweh) Our Righteousness,”** tell us that a descendant (branch) of David will be God (Jeremiah 23:5-6). The words, **“The Word (God) was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”** also tell us that Christ is God (John 1:14). That is why Christ could say, **“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”** (John 14:9). And, that union is what Paul called a great mystery when he said, **“Great is the mystery of godliness: God was revealed in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory”** (1Timothy 3:16). [See Rom. 1:3-4 and 9:5.]

The words, **“I am the LORD, I do not change,”** tell us that God did not change into Christ (Malachi 3:6). Furthermore, because there is only one God, Christ is that One God, not a third creature who is only half God and half man. If that were the case He would not truly be God or truly be man. Therefore, that idea contradicts all of the passages that tell us Christ is God, and all of the passages that tell us that Christ is man. In addition, the words, **“The Word (God) was made flesh,”** tell us that God did not just join Himself to Christ, like two boards being glued together, but took upon Himself the nature of man (John 1:14). And, He took on that nature without changing (Malachi 3:6). The ideas just mentioned are some of the compromise positions invented by the deceitfulness of the human heart (Jeremiah 17:9). In contrast, God wants us to teach what His Word says, not man-made attempts to reconcile His Word with man’s ignorance.

In opposition to all compromise positions, we teach what the words of Scripture actually say, while rejecting any view that goes beyond or contradicts the plain meaning of the words. In addressing such errors the Council of Chalcedon (451)

declared: "We confess one and the same Jesus Christ, the Son and Lord only-begotten, in two natures without mixture, without change, without division, without separation."

5. THE COMMUNION OF NATURES

The communion of the natures of Christ flows from the fact that there is only one Christ, not two. **Because there is only one Christ what happens to His human nature happens to His divine nature.** The words, "**Crucified the Lord of glory,**" tell us that when Christ suffered, God suffered, when Christ was crucified, "**the Lord of glory**" was crucified (1Corinthians 2:8). And, that is true because Christ does not have two personalities or two consciousnesses but one. That is why He could say, "**He who has seen me has seen the Father**" (John 14:9). That is also why the Bible says, "**God was revealed in the flesh**" (1Timothy 3:16).

The words, "**That you might... know the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,**" speak of Christ, not just one of His natures, having all the knowledge of God (Colossians 2:2-3). When Jesus was speaking to His disciples He said, "**All power is given to me**" Matthew 28:18). As God that power was always His, but because there is only one Christ that power belonged to Him as a unified person, not just one of His natures. When He said, "**I will be with you always, even to the end of the world,**" it was His body that was speaking (Matthew 28:20). And, His body could say "**I will be with you**" because His unified person is present with us, not just one of His natures. The same holds true for the words, "**Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them**" (Matthew 18:20). And, because there is only one Christ, after speaking to two disciples on the road to Emmaus He was able to vanish "out of their sight" (Luke 24:31).

6. THE COMMUNICATION OF ATTRIBUTES

Since the personal union of Christ's two natures cannot be complete without a communication or sharing of attributes, that sharing is also revealed in Scripture. Although the truths that we will cover in this section have been mentioned in the section on "Personal Union" here they will be explained more fully.

Edward W. A. Koehler illustrated the communion of attributes between Christ's divine and human natures thus: "A person consists of body and soul; each of these has its own attributes and properties. But as both, body and soul, belong to the same person, the attributes of either body or soul are ascribed to the entire person... Christ has two distinct natures, a human and a divine, each of which has its own essential attributes, functions, and activities, But as both natures belong to the same Person, the attributes and properties of either may be ascribed to the Person." ("A Summary of Christian Doctrine," page 90.)

What Dr. Koehler is saying is that even though Christ is true man (Consisting of both body and soul) the union of His two natures (human and divine) joins the two natures into one person in a way that can be illustrated by the way our body and soul unite to form one person. In clarifying this we speak of the communication of attributes as three kinds or Genera.

The First Genus (Genus Idiomaticum)

The first genus has to do with properties peculiar to the divine or human nature being ascribed to the entire person. For example: Although Christ's human nature was nailed to the cross, the words, "**They... crucified the Lord of glory,**" ascribe the crucifixion to His entire person, both human and divine (1Corinthians 2:8). The same holds true for the words, "**You... killed the Prince of life**" (Acts 3:15). While the words, "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to day, and forever,**" ascribe eternity to the person of Jesus (Hebrews 13:8). And, communication of that attribute is why Christ (whose human nature was about 30 years old at the time) could say, "**Before Abraham was, I am**" (John 8:58).

The Second Genus (Genus Maiestaticum)

The second genus has to do with properties of the divine nature being communicated to the human nature. We see that in Christ's words, "**All power is given to me in heaven and in earth**" (Matthew 28:18). The words, "**The Father... has also given him (Christ) authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man,**" tell us that Christ's human nature ("the son of man") is given divine authority (John 5:26-27). The words, "**As the Father raises the dead, and gives them life; even so the Son gives life to whomever He will,**" were spoken by Jesus on earth and tell us that Jesus has the power to give life. (John 5:21). The words, "**The Son of man will come in the glory of His Father,**" attribute divine glory to Christ's human nature [the son of man] (Matthew 16:27). The words, "**All the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to himself,**" ascribe all the fullness of God to Christ (Colossians 1:19). The words, "**He [God] has appointed a day, when He will judge the world in righteousness by the man He has appointed,**" not only tell us that "the man" will judge, but that He has all of the knowledge needed to judge (Acts 17:31). The Bible also tells us that, "**All the fullness of God dwells in Christ bodily**" (Colossians 1:9). And, "**God was revealed in the flesh**" (1Timothy 3:16). [See also, Col. 2:3,9, Matt. 18:20 and 28:20, John 3:13, Eph. 1:23 and 4:10, Matt. 11:27, Luke 1:33, John 6:62, Phil. 2:6, Heb. 2:7, Matt. 26:64, Mark 14:62, Rom. 8:34, Eph. 1:20 and 4:10, Heb. 8:1.]

The Third Genus (Genus Apotelesmaticum)

The third genus has to do with the entire person being involved in all official acts peculiar to either the divine or human nature. By official acts we mean all acts pertaining to His official work of dying for the sins of the world, destroying the works of the devil, protecting His church, ruling, judging and so forth. For example: the words, **“Jesus Christ... gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world,”** and the words, **“Christ also has loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God,”** speak of Christ’s body being sacrificed (Galatians 1:3-4, Ephesians 5:2). However, the words **“Since the children have flesh and blood, He in the same way took on flesh and blood; so that through His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil,”** tell us that Christ’s divine nature was involved, (Hebrews 2:14). As do the words, **“When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5). In fact, the words, **“The reason the Son of God appeared, was to destroy the works of the devil,”** tell us that Christ’s human nature could never have won the victory alone (1John 3:8).

THE DOCTRINE OF THE STATES OF CHRIST

1. CHRIST'S STATE OF HUMILIATION

The doctrine of Christ’s humiliation has to do with the fact that even though His two natures (divine and human) were inseparably united from the moment of His conception, He chose to live, suffer, and die as a man. That doctrine is summarized in the words, **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being by nature God, did not see equality with God as something to be used for self-glorification: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the nature of a servant, and was born as a man: And being found in human form, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”** (Philippians 2:5-8).

The angel’s words to Mary, **“The holy one who will be born of you,”** tell us that Christ was God (the holy one) from the beginning (Luke 1:35). The Bible also describes the unity of Christ’s divine and human natures in the words, **“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”** and **“All the fullness of God dwells in Christ bodily”** (John 1:14 and Colossians 2:9). What we want to concentrate on in this section is the fact that from His conception until His resurrection Christ refrained from the full and constant use of His divine attributes, and was, **“Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”** (Phil. 2:8). The fact that in order to redeem us Christ was, **“Born under the law”** (Galatians 4:4). Took upon, **“Himself our pains, and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities”** (Isaiah 53:4-5). And, received, **“The curse in our stead: for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree: That the blessing given**

to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13-14). That self-renunciation on the part of Christ is what we refer to as His state of humiliation.

During His humiliation, Christ did not fully avail Himself of everything He, as God, had at His disposal. And, the reason He humbled Himself was for our sakes. The words, **“Do you think that I cannot call on my Father, and He would at once give me more than twelve legions of angels?”** tell us that He could have avoided capture, but did not (Matthew 26:53). The words, **“Jesus said... shall I not drink the cup that my Father has given me?”** tell us that He was willing to be captured and crucified for our sakes (John 18:11). The words, **“When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, To redeem those who were under the law,”** tell us that He came into the world “to redeem” us (Galatians 4:4-5). The words, **“I lay down my life for the sheep... I am laying down my life, that I might take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down voluntarily. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it back. That is the commandment that have I received from my Father,”** tell us that He willingly laid down His life for our sakes (John 10:15-18). The words, **“This is a trustworthy statement, worthy of complete acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,”** tell us the same thing (1Timothy 1:15). Therefore, even though Christ could have escaped crucifixion, He chose not to, but was **“obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”** (Philippians 2:8). Without that obedience, He could not have died for our sins, and we would be lost. [See Isaiah 53:1-6, 2corinthians 5:19-21.]

However, even though Christ did not fully avail Himself of divine power during His state of humiliation, the power was still there, and He employed it when it was in our interest for Him to do so. For example, all of the miracles that He did were done by divine power. The words, **“These are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name,”** tell us that they were recorded for our salvation (John 20:31). And, because He endured the agony of the cross we can be, **“Justified freely by His grace... through faith in His blood”** (Romans 3:24-25).

2. ERRONEOUS VIEWS REGARDING CHRIST'S HUMILIATION

Christ’s humiliation did not consist of the fact that He took upon Himself the nature of man, for He still has both natures. His humiliation is summarized in the words, **“Being found in human form, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”** (Philippians 2:8). Those words tell us that He had “human form” before He “humbled Himself”.

Likewise, Christ's humiliation did not involve a loss of His divine nature, or its attributes. Nor did it involve a reduction or diminishing of the divine nature. The words, **"I and my Father are one,"** and **"He who has seen me has seen the Father,"** tell us that while He was on earth He was still fully divine (John 10:30 and 14:9). The words, **"I am the LORD, I do not change,"** tell us that God can never be reduced or diminished (Malachi 3:6). The words, **"Whatever the Father does, the Son also does,"** tell us that while Christ was on earth He was able to do anything the Father did (John 5:19). And, the words, **"All the fullness of God dwells in Christ bodily,"** also make it clear that Christ was fully divine (Colossians 2:9). [See Psalm 102:27, 1Timothy 6:16.]

Whatever Christ does after His incarnation He does not do as God alone, but as the God-man, the incarnate Messiah. The words, **"How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"** tell us that Christ "offered Himself" through "the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14). The words, **"God left nothing outside His control. However we do not yet see everything under His control. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor; because He suffered death so that by the grace of God He might taste death for every man,"** tell us that Christ (who was fully in control) willingly suffered death for us (Hebrews 2:8-9). And, the words, **"From now on the Son of man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God,"** and **"Who has entered into heaven, and is at God's right hand,"** Tell us that Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God came at the end of His humiliation (Luke 22:69, 1Peter 3:22).

3. THE SEVERAL STAGES OF THE HUMILIATION

The humiliation of Christ extended throughout His earthly life from His conception to, and including, His burial. As I mentioned previously, Christ's humiliation did not consist of the fact that He took upon Himself the nature of man. However, because all men are subject to the devil through sin, He had to be born without sin in order to redeem us. That stage of His humiliation involved His willingness to be carried in a womb, born, and be subject to His parents. It is described in the words, **"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich"** (2Corinthians 8:9).

The second stage of His humiliation was His willingness to be subject to the law. That involved His circumcision, education and life. The words, **"When eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called JESUS,"** tell us that He was circumcised (Luke 2:21). His education is included in the words, **"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man"** (Luke 2:52). And, His life which undoubtedly included all of the hardships, dangers, temptations and reproaches common to this life, is described in

the words, **“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has no place to lay His head”** (Luke 9:58). [See Matt. 2:13, Luke 2:7, Matt. 8:17 and 20, Matt. 9:14, Matt. 17:27.]

The third stage of His humiliation includes all of the suffering leading up to and including His death on the cross. That stage of humiliation is described in the words, **“Surely He has taken on himself our pains, and carried our sorrows: yet we regarded him as condemned, struck down by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the punishment that brought us peace was upon him; and by His stripes we are healed. Like sheep we have all gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was mistreated, yet He did not open His mouth: He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who at that time understood? for He was cut off from the land of the living: and struck down for His people’s sins. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had not committed any crime, nor was any deceit in His mouth”** (Isaiah 53:4-9).

The words, **“About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** describe the horror of His death (Matthew 27:46). The words, **“God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us; so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him,”** tell us the reason for His death (2Corinthians 5:21). The words, **“He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,”** tell us of His willingness to die for us (Philippians 2:8). And, the words, **“Jesus, having cried again with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit,”** describe His death (Matthew 27:50).

4. THE STATE OF EXALTATION

“Christ's state of exaltation began with His return to life in the grave, and exhibited itself to the lower world by His descent into hell, to the world by His glorious resurrection, and to the highest heavens by His ascension and session at the right hand of God the Father.” (John Theodore Mueller, “Christian Dogmatics,” page 295.) The words, **“He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God has also highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,”** summarize the doctrine of Christ’s exaltation (Philippians 2:8-10). As do the words, **“He [God] raised Him [Christ] 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 has put all things under His feet” (Ephesians 1:20-22). [See Eph. 4:10.]

By telling us that Christ, **“Was raised again for our justification,”** and that, **“If Christ did not rise, our preaching is a waste of time, and your faith is worthless,”** the Bible tells us that Christ’s exaltation also took place for our salvation (Romans 4:25). Thus our faith rests upon both Christ’s crucifixion and His resurrection. As it is written, **“Brethren, I want to remind you of the gospel that I preached to you, that you believed, and upon which your faith rests... 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”** (1Corinthians 15:1-4).

5. THE SEVERAL STAGES OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION

Following His resurrection Christ, a) descended into hell, b) left the tomb, c) spent forty days on earth, d) ascended unto heaven, e) sat down at the right hand of God, and f) will return to judge the living and the dead.

Regarding His descent into hell, Christ’s words, **“It is finished,”** tell us that He did not suffer in hell (John 19:30). Likewise, His words, **“Today you will be with me in paradise,”** tell us that He was in heaven, not hell, while His body was in the grave (Luke 23:43). Because the Bible specifically defines “paradise” as “heaven” (2Corinthians 12:2-4), the idea that paradise was in hell is an unscriptural myth. That myth rests on a number of false assumptions. One of those assumptions is the myth (passed on as tradition in Catholic circles) that Old Testament saints could not receive forgiveness until Christ died. That myth flies in the face of all the Old Testament passages that speak of forgiveness. As it is written, **“There is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared”** and again **“You have forgiven the iniquity of your people”** (Psalm 130:4 and 85:2). In fact, **without forgiveness Abraham’s faith could never have been “counted... to him for righteousness,”** for it is forgiveness and forgiveness alone that makes us righteous in the sight of God (Genesis 15:6). And, the words, **“Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,”** tell us that it was after Christ was “quickened” [made alive] that He proclaimed His victory to those who are in hell awaiting the final judgment (1Peter 3:18-20). Moreover, the term translated “preached” in this passage, “Does not mean more than to proclaim... as the context shows, the term manifestly denotes Law-preaching” (John Theodore Mueller, “Christian Dogmatics,” page 296.)

Regarding Christ’s departure from the tomb, the words, **“The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and going to the tomb rolled back the stone from**

the door, and sat on it... And the angel spoke and said to the women, Do not be afraid: for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here: for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay," tell us that Jesus left the tomb before the angel rolled back the stone (Matthew 28:2-6).

While the words, **"Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,"** and **"He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand,"** tell us that the father raised Christ from the dead (Romans 6:4, Ephesians 1:20); the words, **"I am laying down my life, that I might take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down voluntarily. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it back,"** tell us that Christ was the cause of His own resurrection (John 10:17-18). The words, **"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,"** also tell us that Christ rose under His own power (John 2:19). Both statements are true because what is done by one person of the Trinity is never done to the exclusion of the other two. And, for that reason, Christ's resurrection is in itself a powerful proof of His deity.

The words, **"Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is really me: handle me, and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see me have,"** and the words, **"Bring your finger here, and examine my hands; and stretch out your hand, and thrust it into my side: and do not be faithless, but believing,"** tell us that Christ came out of the tomb with the same body that went into the tomb, the same body that was born of the Virgin Mary (Luke 24:39, John 20:27). However, the words, **"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. As there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body,"** tell us that He rose with a glorified body (1Corinthians 15:44). And, the words, **"Who will transform our vile bodies, and make them like His glorified body, by the power by which He is able to bring everything under His control,"** tell us that we also will receive a glorified body like His (Philippians 3:21). [See, Acts 2:24, Heb. 2:14-15, Rom. 4:25, 1Peter 1:3-4, John 11:25-26 and 14:19, 2Cor. 4:14, 1Thess. 4:14, Rom. 6:4-5, 2Cor. 5:15.]

Regarding the forty days following Christ's resurrection, the words, **"He also showed that He was alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them [His disciples] for forty days, and talking with them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God,"** tell us that He spent forty days on earth before His ascension (Acts 1:2-3). During those forty days Christ did not spend the majority of His time with His disciples as He had done before. However, He did appear to them a number of times, and the words, **"Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is really me,"** emphasized to His disciples the fact that His resurrection was a physical resurrection (Luke 24:39). The words, **"So after they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter,"** also tell us that Jesus ate with His disciples after the resurrection (John 21:15). That is significant because Jews believed that a being without flesh and blood (a phantom) could not eat food. And, the words, **"Every spirit who does not**

confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist,” tell us why that fact was important (1John 4:3).

The words, **“He rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and that He was seen by Peter, then by the twelve, after that, He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once; most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. After that, He was seen by James; then by all the apostles,”** list some of Christ’s appearances during the forty days (1Corinthians 15:4-7).

Regarding Christ’s ascension unto heaven, the words, **“After He had said these things, while they watched, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight,”** describe what happened (Acts 1:9). Although I could combine Christ’s ascension with His sitting down at the right hand of the father, I have treated them as two steps in His exaltation because His ascension was seen by witnesses while His sitting down at the right hand of the father was not. The fact that Christ is with the Father tells us that the heaven He ascended into is not some place in space (which is part of God’s creation) but the dwelling place of God who transcends both space and time. The ancient Jews referred to that place as “the third heaven” [the first being the place where the birds are, and the second being the place where the stars are] (2Corinthians 12:2). And, the words, **“In my Father’s house are many mansions... if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also,”** tell us that we will be in the same place (John 14:2-3).

Regarding Christ’s position at the right hand of God, the words, **“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the true image of His nature, and sustaining all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself made purification for our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,”** tell us that when the work of redemption was finished Christ sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:3). The words, **“Your right hand, O LORD, is glorious in power,”** tell us that the right hand of God is a position of power (Exodus 15:6). And, the words, **“You will see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven,”** tell us that when Christ will return He will be wielding the power of God (Matthew 26:64).

The words **“We have such a high priest, and He sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, He is the minister of the true Holy Place, in the real tabernacle, that was set up by the Lord, and not by man,”** tell us that sitting on the right hand of God is not a location that limits Him, but from there He officiates as our high priest (Hebrews 8:1-2). The words, **“If I take the wings of the morning, and stay at the most distant parts of the sea, even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand will hold me,”** tell us that God’s right hand is not a place, but a position of power that can be present wherever we are (Psalm 139:9-10).

The words, **“Who, being by nature God, did not see equality with God as something to be used for self-glorification,”** tell us that as God Christ was equal to the Father and, therefore, over all things (Philippians 2:6). For that reason, when the Bible says that Christ will be subject to the Father, it is telling us that Christ’s human nature will be subject to the divine. One such passage is 1Corinthians 15:25-28 where we read, **“For He must reign, until God has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For God has put everything under His feet. But when He says that everything has been put under Him, it is evident that this does not include the one who put all things under Him. And when all things are subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all”**. Another passage is Ephesians 1:20-23 where we read, **“He (God) raised Him (Christ) 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 has put all things under His feet, and appointed him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fullness of him that fills all in all”**. [See 1Peter 3:22, Acts 3:21, Eph. 4:10, Psalm 110:1, Heb. 2:7-8.]

Regarding Christ’s second advent, the words, **“I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom,”** tell us that Christ will judge both the living and the dead when He returns (2Timothy 4:1-2). That topic will be dealt with in the chapter on Eschatology (the last things).

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S OFFICE

The words, **“This is a trustworthy statement, worthy of complete acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the worst,”** tell us the reason Christ came into the world (1Timothy 1:15). You will notice that He did not come to make us righteous through works, He came to save us from our sins. As it is written, **“The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10). [See Matt. 18:11.] And, the work of our salvation involves, 1) teaching us the way of salvation, 2) making satisfaction for our sins, and 3) reigning as head over those whom He has saved.

In teaching us the way of salvation He functioned as a **prophet**, and that prophetic role was foretold in the words. **“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from the midst of you, from your brethren; you must listen to him”** (Deuteronomy 18:15). In making atonement for our sins He functioned as a **priest**, and that priestly role was foretold in the words, **“The LORD has sworn, and will not change, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”**

(Psalm 110:4). [See Hebrews 5:6.] As head over His church He functions as a **king**, and that role was foretold in the words, **“I installed my king upon my holy hill of Zion... Blessed are all those who put their trust in him”** (Psalm 2:6,12). **That is why we say that Christ has a threefold office, the office of Prophet, Priest and King.** [See, John 17:4 and 3:16, Matt. 18:11, Luke 1:30-31, Matt. 1:21,25, Luke 2:21, Luke 4:18, John 1:18, Heb. 1:1, Matt. 17:2, 2Cor. 5:18-19, Matt. 20:28, Rom. 5:10, 1John 2:2, Luke 1:33, Eph. 1: 20-23, John 18:33-37, Deut. 18:15-19, Ps. 110:2 and 6-12, Heb. 6:20 and 7:17.]

A. THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF CHRIST

1. EXECUTING THIS OFFICE IN THE STATE OF HUMILIATION

Because Christ is **“The mighty God, The everlasting Father”** (Isaiah 9:6), when He taught He did not receive His message by inspiration, as did the prophets of old (2Timothy 3:16), but instead spoke as God Himself. As it is written, **“God, who in the past spoke to the fathers at many times and in various ways through the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days in the person of His Son**, whom He has appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe” (Hebrews 1:1-2). For that reason, **“The people were astonished at His doctrine**, For He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:28-29). And, the authority He spoke with did not consist of acting like He had authority, but of the fact that, **“His word was with power”** (Luke 4:32). It was the power of the Spirit of God witnessing to the hearts of the hearers that astonished them.

The message Christ proclaimed was one of repentance and faith. As it is written, **“Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** // **“The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”** // **“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** // **“Every one who looks to the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up on the last day”** (Matthew 4:17 and 20:28, John 3:14-15 and 6:40). While Christ proclaimed the Law as part of His call to repentance, His focus was on the Gospel-truth of salvation through His death as our substitute. We see that in the words, **“He took the twelve aside, and said to them, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets concerning the Son of man will come to pass, for He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked, and treated spitefully, and spit on. And they will scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day He will rise again”** (Luke 18:31-33). [See, Matt. 16:21, Mark 8:31, Matt. 11:28-30, John 6:29,32,33,35.]

The words, **“I tell you truly, Until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter or stroke will pass from the law,”** tell us that Christ did not do away with the Law, or replace it with something else (Matthew 5:18). Instead, the words, **“Woe to you also, you lawyers! for you load men down with burdens they can hardly bear, and you yourselves do not touch those burdens with one of your fingers,”** tell us that the Pharisees, for all their legalism, rationalized God’s Law and made excuses to get around it (Luke 11:46). Much of what Jesus said about the Law was aimed at correcting their false interpretations, while calling the People to repentance. We see an example of that in the words, **“You disregard the commandment of God, and hold to the tradition of men, such as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such things. And He said to them, You completely invalidate the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honor your father and mother; and, Anyone who curses his father or mother, let him be put to death, but you say, If a man will say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is a gift, by which you might profit by me; he shall be free. And you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition, that you have handed down: and you do many things like that”** (Mark 7:8-13).

The words, **“Jesus replied, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,”** and the words, **“The entire law is summed up in one command; You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”** tell us that the Law has not passed away (Matthew 22:37-40, Galatians 5:14). Moreover, the words, **“The law is not meant for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious,”** tell us that those who are unrepentant are still under the Law, and will be condemned by the Law (1Timothy 1:9). So I repeat, **“Until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter or stroke will pass from the law”** (Matthew 5:18).

Another problem that Jesus had to deal with, was the idea that riches were evidence of God’s favor. That idea often gave the wealthy a false assurance of salvation, while undermining the faith of the poor. We see that in the words, **“How hard is it for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God”** and in the words, **“He (Jesus) looked at His disciples, and said, Blessed are you who are poor: for yours is the kingdom of God”** (Mark 10:24, Luke 6:20). Therefore, in reading passages like that we need to understand that the Bible is not saying that there is some virtue in being poor, but that we should not trust in riches. Whenever people derive their assurance of salvation from something other than God’s promise of forgiveness in Christ, they have a false Gospel (1Corinthians 15:1-4).

2. THE PROPHETIC OFFICE IN THE STATE OF EXALTATION

Since Christ has ascended unto heaven He is no longer here to proclaim the Gospel in person. However, He is still at work proclaiming the Gospel through His church, and the men He raises up to carry out the work of the church. The words, **“Jesus said, Peace be with you: as my Father has sent me, even so I am sending you,”** tell us that Christ sent His disciples to do that work (John 20:21). The words, **“The disciples went out, and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word through the signs that went with it,”** tell us that **“the Lord worked with”** those who preached the Gospel (Mark 16:20). And, the words, **“I will always be with you, even to the end of the world. Amen,”** tell us that Christ continues to be with us, and to work with those who preach the Gospel (Matthew 28:20).

The Apostle Paul said, **“Christ is speaking through me”** and **“Has saved us, and called us to a holy calling”** (2Corinthians 13:3, 2Timothy 1:9). The words, **“His gift made some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers,”** tell us that His gift makes some “pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11). When the Apostle Paul says, **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,”** his words tell us that the Gospel message is the “word of Christ” (Colossians 3:16). The words, **“Jesus said to the Jews who believed on him, If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples,”** tell us that He does not want us looking outside of His Word for doctrine, or teaching any ideas that do not come from His Word (John 8:31). The words, **“If any man speaks, let him speak according to God’s Word; if any man serves, let him do it with the ability that God gives,”** again tells us that what we are to teach is what the Bible says, and God gives us ability (1Peter 4:11). And, the words, **“If anyone teaches otherwise, and will not agree with sound teaching, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine that is in accord with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing,”** tell us that our Lord does not want anyone teaching any doctrine that is not in His Word or contradicts what His Word says (1Timothy 6:3-4).

The words, **“They worship me (Christ) in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,”** tell us that teaching the opinions of men hinders the work of salvation, and can destroy souls (Matthew 15:9). Therefore, all who do so are, **“false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”** (Matthew 7:15). **“For such people are not serving our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple”** (Romans 16:18). Dr. A. Strong rightly says: **“All modern prophecy that is true is but the republication of Christ's message, the proclamation and expounding of truth already revealed in Scripture.”** (Syst. Theol, p. 389.)

Christ, as God the Son, is not only the true teacher of His church in this age, but was also the teacher before His incarnation. We see that in all of the passages where we read, **“The Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying”** or,

“The Word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying” or, “The Word of the LORD came to Solomon” (Genesis 15:1, 2Samuel 7:4, 1Kings 6:11). We are also told of this in the words, **“Concerning this salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, have inquired and searched diligently, seeking to know what person, or period of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating, when it testified in advance about the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that would follow”** (1Peter 1:10-11). [Notice the words, **“Spirit of Christ”** in that verse.]

B. THE PRIESTLY OFFICE OF CHRIST

The same grace that Christ proclaimed as our divine Prophet He obtained for us as our divine priest. As it is written, **“We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... For by one offering He has perfected for ever those who are sanctified”** (Hebrews 10:10-14). For, He is, **“The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29). He, **“Gave Himself a ransom for all”** (1Timothy 2:6). **“The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”** (Isaiah 53:6). And, **“He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”** (1John 2:2).

The words, **“Christ then arrived as a high priest of the good things about to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with human hands, that is to say, not a part of this creation, and it was not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood that He entered once for all into the holy place, obtaining eternal redemption for us,”** tell us that what Christ obtained for us was obtained **“by His own blood”** (Hebrews 9:11-12). For, **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, receiving the curse in our stead: for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree”** (Galatians 3:13). He **“Gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for Himself a special people, eager to do good works”** (Titus 2:14). And, because of His sacrifice, **“We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”** (Ephesians 1:7). **“For you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body, and with your spirit, which are God’s”** (1Corinthians 6:20). **“Knowing that you were not redeemed from the fruitless lifestyle handed down to you by tradition from your fathers, with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”** (1Peter 1:18-19).

The Bible uses many different words to describe what Christ accomplished as our High Priest, and they all play an important role in understanding what He accomplished. For example:

- a) If two parties are alienated and hostile to each other, a **mediator** is someone who goes to each party in order to work out a reconciliation. The words, **“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”** describe Christ as our Mediator (1Timothy 2:5). The words, **“The covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one, being founded on better promises,”** and the words, **“He is the mediator of a new testament, so that since a death has taken place that redeems them from sins committed under the first testament, those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance,”** describe Him as **“The mediator of the new covenant”** (Hebrews 8:6, 9:15 and 12:24).
- b) If you sell something, buying it back is called **redeeming** it. We see that word used in Leviticus 25:29, **“If a man sells a residence in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold”**. The words, **“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”** tell us that we are “justified” through the **redemption** Christ made for us – His own death being the price (Romans 3:23-24). The words, **“We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins,”** and the words, **“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,”** tell us that we were **redeemed** by the “blood” of Christ, that we are redeemed by the forgiveness of sins, and that it is ours through “grace” (Colossians 1:14 and Ephesians 1:7). **“You are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption”** (1Corinthians 1:30). [See 1Timothy 2:6, Hebrews 9:12,15.]
- c) If two parties are alienated from each other a propitiation would be something that would eradicate anger bringing peace and reconciliation. The words, **“God has shown His love for us... This is the love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins,”** tell us that what Christ did removed the anger that separated us from God (1John 4:9-10). For, **“Christ Jesus”** is the one, **“Whom God has 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). And, Christ, **“Is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”** (1John 2:2).
- d) Christ’s death has propitiated God’s anger making **reconciliation** possible. And, **“If, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, when we were enemies, much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved by His life”** (Romans 5:10). **“For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation”** (2Corinthians 5:19). As a result, **“You who once were far away are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both Jew and Gentile one... that He might reconcile both to God in**

one body by the cross” (Ephesians 2:13-16). “For all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him [Christ], and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself” (Colossians 1:19-20).

- e) Christ’s death is also described as a ransom. In both Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 we read, **“The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”**.
- f) The Bible tells us that Christ was made sin for us. As it is written, **“God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us; so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2Corinthians 5:21).** And by, **“Sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3).**
- g) The Bible tells us that Christ became “a curse for us”. As it is written, **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us [i.e. receiving the curse in our stead], for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).**
- h) The Bible tells us that Christ took our sins and their punishment upon Himself. As it is written, **“Surely He has taken on Himself our pains, and carried our sorrows: yet we regarded Him as condemned, struck down by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed. Like sheep we have all have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6).** For He, **“Bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live to righteousness” (1Peter 2:24).** And, that is why John the Baptist said that Christ was, **“The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).**
- i) The Bible tells us that Christ shed His blood for our sins. As it is written, **“It was not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood that He entered once for all into the holy place, obtaining eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).** For, **“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us of all sin” (1John 1:7).** And, that is why Christ said, **“This is My blood, that of the new testament, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).**
- j) The Bible tells us that Christ’s death **blotted out** the indictment against us. As it is written, **“He has made you, who were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, alive together with him, having forgiven all of your sins, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (Colossians 2:13-14).**
- k) The Bible tells us that Christ freed us from the **curse of the Law**. As it is written, **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, receiving the curse in our stead: for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree” (Galatians**

3:13). And, **“God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5).

- l) The Bible tells us that Christ freed us from the **wrath** of God. As it is written, **“You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who has rescued us from the wrath to come”** (1Thessalonians 1:9-10). **“For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that, whether we are watching or sleeping, we will live together with him”** (1Thessalonians 5:9-10).
- m) The Bible tells us that Christ freed us from eternal **condemnation**. As it is written, **“Truly, truly, I tell you, He who hears My word, and believes on Him who sent me, has everlasting life, and will not come into condemnation; but has passed from death to life”** (John 5:24). **“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (Romans 8:1).
- n) The Bible tells us that in Christ we are **righteous** and **beloved**. **“For God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us; so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”** (2Corinthians 5:21). And so, **“Beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ”** (Romans 1:7).

In the Old Testament the priests offered lambs and goats for the sins of the people. However, in the third chapter of Galatians the Apostle Paul carefully explains to us that in every age salvation has always been through faith in Christ. As it is written, **“The Scripture, having foreseen that God would justify the heathen through faith, proclaimed the gospel to Abraham in advance, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So then those who have faith in Christ are blessed with Abraham, who also believed”** (Galatians 3:8-9). Why then was the Law given? Paul goes on to tell us that, **“The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be declared righteous by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster”** (Galatians 3:24-25). And, how did the law bring people to faith in Christ? Well it was divided into two parts. The purpose of the commandments and condemnation of sin was to reveal to us our sin and need of God’s forgiveness. Which is why Paul said, **“The knowledge of sin comes by the law”** (Romans 3:20). The purpose of the sacrifices was to teach the people the importance of admitting their sin and seeking God’s forgiveness. **It is important to understand that the sacrifices were not a different way of salvation, “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins”** (Hebrews 10:4). By requiring animal sacrifice, God taught the people that forgiveness is not cheap. And, **because God instituted those sacrifices as a type of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice, He counted faith in the promise of forgiveness that He had connected**

with that sacrifice as faith in Christ. For, “The covenant concerning faith in Christ, that was confirmed by God at the time of Abraham, cannot be nullified by the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, so as to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it is not given by promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Galatians 3:17-18). David trusted in that promise, saying, “I have placed my faith in your grace [mercy]; my heart will rejoice in your salvation” (Psalm 13:5). And, that promise of grace (mercy) is why God said, “I desired mercy, and not sacrifice” (Hosea 6:6). The actual sacrifices were just a means of giving people God’s promise of mercy and forgiveness. Salvation has always been, and will always be, through faith in God’s promise of forgiveness in Christ!

The Bible describes Christ’s saving work as obedience. That obedience can be seen as: **a) the active obedience** by which He placed Himself under the Law and fulfilled it in our stead, and; **b) the passive obedience** by which He allowed Himself to be crucified and placed under the curse of God for our sakes. Concerning His active obedience we read, **“God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5). “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19). [See Matt. 3:15.] Concerning His passive obedience we read, “And being found in human form, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). And, His blood, His death on the cross, is the purchase price of our salvation. As it is written, “Feed the church of God, that He has purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).**

By His obedience Christ Has delivered us from; a) **sin**, b) **death**, and c) **the dominion of sin** [power of the devil]. Concerning the first, we read, **“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity” (Titus 2:14).** Concerning the second, we read, **“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” (Hebrews 2: 14).** And, concerning the third, we read, **“For sin will not have dominion over you: because you are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14).**

1. THE VICARIOUS ATONEMENT

What Christ accomplished on the cross, the sacrifice He made for our redemption, is known in theology as His vicarious [i.e. substitutionary] atonement. Now, the word “atonement” is used throughout the Old Testament, and the blood sacrifices that were required of those under the law were designed help us to think of Christ as, **“The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).**

Isaiah speaks of God laying "**the iniquity of us all**" on Christ (Isaiah 53:6). And Paul uses the word "atonement" in reference to Christ's death (Romans 5:11). As it is written, "**For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous man: although perhaps some might even dare to die for a good man. But God demonstrates His love for us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 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 rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement**" (Romans 5:6-11). For, "**The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many**" (Matthew 20:28). And, "**We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace**" (Ephesians 1:7).

2. THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST, AND FAITH

When the Bible says, "**This is a trustworthy statement, worthy of complete acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,**" it is telling us that Christ's reason for coming into the world was to save us from our sins (1Timothy 1:15). And, the words, "**The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many,**" tell us that He came in order to save us through His death (Mark 10:45). Therefore, when, "**Jesus said, It is finished, and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost,**" we know that He had accomplished what He set out to do (John 19:30). The words, "**The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us of all sin,**" tell us that the work of atonement is complete (1John 1:7). There is nothing more to be done! As it is written, "**The LORD has laid on Him [Christ] the iniquity of us all**" (Isaiah 53:6).

However, in understanding Christ's death, we should never assume that God just transferred our guilt to Christ and let Him take the blame for what we did. If our guilt could be removed simply by transferring it to someone else there would have been no reason for Christ to die. If that was all it took to remove our sins then no one on earth would be guilty because God placed the sins of everyone on Christ. And, if that was all it took to remove our sin, then it would not have mattered if Christ was sinless or not just as long as our guilt was transferred to Him. However, what God had in mind is far more glorious and far more profound. The Bible does say, "**The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all**" (Isaiah 53:6). **But, the atonement for that sin was not complete until Christ died.** Therefore, from the moment that God laid our sins "on Him," while He was hanging on the cross, our sins were in two places, on us and on Him. Those sins condemned us, and they condemned Him as well. On the cross, He suffered the condemnation, punishment and death that we deserved. Then, when He died, something that was totally unexpected (from the

world's point of view) happened. **Because Christ had no sin of His own, God forgave the sins that had been placed on Him, and pronounced Him innocent. For that reason, those sins no longer condemn Christ. They have been forgiven!** And, because they were our sins, and have been forgiven, **that forgiveness becomes ours when we place our faith in Christ.** As it is written, **"Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise might be given to those who believe, through faith in Jesus Christ"** (Galatians 3:22).

That means that Christ has already obtained forgiveness for every sin that has ever been committed. The forgiveness is already there for us! We do not have to earn it, or make ourselves worthy of it. We simply need to repent and believe that Christ has obtained forgiveness for us. Furthermore, repentance and faith is itself a gift of God, not something we do. The words, **"With gentleness instructing those who oppose their own interest; in the hope that God will give them repentance bringing them to a realization of the truth,"** tell us that repentance is a gift of God (2Timothy 2:25). The words, **"For you are saved by grace through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,"** tell us that faith is a "gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). The words, **"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,"** tell us that God gives us His gift of faith through His "Word" (Romans 10:17). The words, **"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,"** tell us that salvation ("eternal life") is a "gift of God" (Romans 6:23). And, the words, **"We also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand,"** tell us that faith in Christ is the hand that receives God's gift of grace (Romans 5:2). In contrast, the words, **"Without faith it is impossible to please God,"** tell us that "without faith it is **impossible**" to be reconciled to God (Hebrews 11:6).

Repentance

The words, **"God will not despise a heart that is humbled and sorry for sin,"** tell us that those who are truly repentant will be sorry they have sinned (Psalm 51:17). And, the words, **"The Lord GOD says; Repent, and turn away from your idols; and turn your backs on all your abominations,"** tell us that those who repent will turn away from sin, (Ezekiel 14:6). Those passages of Scripture tell us that even though repentance is a gift of God, not a work, those who receive it will not want to continue in sin. Therefore, **true repentance will produce a change in behavior** as a fruit or by product. As it is written, **"Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance"** (Matthew 3:8). However, because it is faith in Christ's finished work that saves, repentance and faith go hand in hand, and without faith repentance is incomplete. As it is written, **"Repent and turn to God [believing His promise of forgiveness in Christ (Gal. 3:18)], and live lives consistent with repentance"** (Acts 26:20).

3. ERRORS PERTAINING TO CHRIST'S VICARIOUS ATONEMENT

Because the truth of Christ's atonement – His triumph over sin, death and the devil – is at the very heart of the Gospel, Satan has tried time and again to deny it, distort it, and undermine it. In the twelfth century, the Church of Rome began to claim that the priest was sacrificing Christ again every time He said a Mass; a claim that trivializes Christ's sacrifice while diverting faith from what Christ did to what the priest does. Another heresy of Rome is the idea that people can atone, in part, for their own sins or the sins of others through the things that they suffer. That heresy is at the root of their doctrine of purgatory. Both of those doctrines fly in the face of Christ's words, **"It is finished,"** contradict the words, **"For by one offering He has perfected for ever those who are sanctified,"** and are condemned by the words, **"If anyone preaches any gospel to you other than the one you received, let him be accursed"** (John 19:30, Galatians 1:9).

The words, **"He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,"** tell us that Christ atoned for the sins of all men, not just those who are saved (1John 2:2). In contrast, the words, **"Without faith it is impossible to please God,"** tell us that even though Christ obtained forgiveness for the sins of the entire world, and it is offered to us as a free gift, that forgiveness does not become ours until God brings us to faith (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is the hand that receives God's grace, as it is written, we **"Have access by faith into this grace in which we stand"** (Romans 5:2).

The claim that God, at the time of Christ's death, declared all men righteous and was reconciled to the entire world does not come from Scripture. The words, **"He who does not believe the Son will not see life; but God's wrath remains on him,"** tell us that unbelievers are not reconciled to God, but are active recipients of His wrath (John 3:36). As I mentioned previously, during the time Christ hung on the cross, our sins were in two places, on us and on Him. Those sins condemned us, and they condemned Him as well. On the cross, He suffered the punishment that we deserved. But, when He died, because He had no sins of His own, God forgave the sins that had been placed on Him. As a result, those sins no longer condemn Him. He has been forgiven! And, because He has been forgiven we can be forgiven too. Because the sins that God laid on Him were our sins, the forgiveness that He received is already there for us, and becomes ours when we place our faith in Him. As it is written, **"Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise might be given to those who believe, through faith in Jesus Christ"** (Galatians 3:22).

Satan often tries to undermine faith in what Christ has done by redefining either faith or grace to include works. The words, **"You are saved by grace through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast,"** tell us that faith is "not of works" (Ephesians 2:8-9). The words,

“When a man does not work, but trusts in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,” tell us that faith excludes works (Romans 4:5). In the third chapter of Galatians, the Apostle Paul carefully explains to us that faith excludes works, saying, **“Scripture, having foreseen that God would justify the heathen through faith, proclaimed the gospel to Abraham in advance... For all who trust in the law are under a curse... But it is clear that no man is justified in the sight of God by the law, for, The just shall live by faith. However the law has nothing to do with faith... Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, receiving the curse in our stead: for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree: That the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”** (Galatians 3:6-14) And, the words, **“There is also at this present time a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works: if it were grace would no longer be grace. For if it is by works, then it is no longer by grace: otherwise work is no longer work,”** tell us that grace excludes works (Romans 11:5-6). All of those passages tell us that **true faith, faith in Christ, is believing that forgiveness and eternal life are ours because of what Christ did, not because of what we do.** As it is written, **“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16).

Even though the Apostle Paul carefully explains why the law cannot make us righteous, those who want to be motivated by the law are continually trying to find some way around his words. Therefore, as soon as they learn that James said, **"By works a man is justified and not by faith only,"** they assume that the words of James negate what Paul said (Romans 3:28, James 2:24). In their blindness they then feel free to ignore Paul's warnings against trusting in works. However, a careful examination of what James said makes it clear that **Paul and James were talking about two different things.** When Paul spoke of faith he was referring to faith in Christ. In contrast, the words, **"You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe and tremble,"** are not speaking of faith in Christ. Christ did not die for the sins of devils. Likewise, when Paul spoke of works he was referring to works of righteousness, or obedience to the law. In contrast, the words, **"Was not Rahab the Harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way,"** make it perfectly clear that the works James had in mind were not works of obedience, or righteousness, but what we would call the fruits of faith (James 2:19, 20, 25). He was saying that Rahab's actions were consistent with what she believed. Therefore, James was not saying that we need works of righteousness in addition to faith. Instead he was saying that if a person truly has faith in Christ it will make a difference in their life.

Those who claim to believe that salvation is through faith in Christ, but teach that God's favor depends on what we do, not what Christ did on the cross, are **double-minded**, and undermine the Gospel by making righteousness depend on works. I have dealt with people who profess to trust in Christ, but live in constant fear that God will punish them if they do not "obey" what He tells them through a "still-small-voice" in their heart. That doctrine is condemned by the words, "**If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples**" (John 8:31). Those words tell us that those who are truly Christ's disciples will not look outside of His Word for direction. And the words, "**Christ is of no benefit to those of you who seek righteousness by the law; you are fallen from grace,**" condemn everyone who trusts in what they do (rather than what Christ did on the cross) to make them righteous (Galatians 5:4). While it is true that those who are truly repentant will shun sin and seek righteousness, the improvement in behavior is not what saves them or makes them righteous. On the contrary, the words, "**Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and they are opposed to each other: so that you cannot do the things that you would,**" tell us that the improvement in behavior does not come until after they are saved (Galatians 5:16-17). [See Gal. 3:2, 2Cor. 5:17.]

While Satan continually tries to undermine the Gospel by adding works to faith, he also tries to undermine it by twisting it into an excuse to sin. The words, "**Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Absolutely not. How can we, who are dead to sin, continue living in it?**" tell us that the Apostle Paul had to deal with that heresy (Romans 6:1-2). And, it is becoming more and more prevalent today, with those who are openly immoral and even homosexual claiming that God accepts them without repentance. That lie is condemned by the words, "**How much more severely, do you think a man deserves to be punished, who has trampled the Son of God under foot, treated the blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified, as an unholy thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, Vengeance belongs to Me, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God**" (Hebrews 10:29-31). "**Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sex perverts, nor homosexuals, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God**" (1Corinthians 6:9-10). The words, "**The law is not meant for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the irreverent and profane, for those who strike or kill their fathers or mothers, for murders, For those who sin sexually, for sodomites, for kidnapers and slave traders, for liars and perjurers, and for any other thing that is contrary to sound teaching,**" tell us that all who sin willfully are under the condemnation of God's Law (1Timothy 1:9-10).

Another very common way Satan undermines the Gospel is with the antichristian doctrine of theistic-evolution and millions of years. The words, “Just as sin entered the world by one man, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, because all have sinned... Therefore as through the sin of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so through the righteousness of one the free gift abounds to all men bringing justification and life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many will be made righteous,” tell us that the fall of Adam and Christ’s death on the cross go hand in hand (Romans 3:12 and 18-19). If sin and death were part of God’s original creation, if God used evolution to create life, if the fall of Adam did not bring sin and death into the world, there would have been no reason for Christ to die on the cross. And, if the rocks of the earth formed slowly over millions of years as unbelievers assert, then the presence of fossil thorns in the rocks before Adam sinned would cast doubt upon all that the Bible says about Adam’s sin and Christ’s remedy for that sin. **Therefore, those who reject what the Bible says about creation and the age of the earth are undermining the Gospel and should be rejected as deceivers.** As it is written, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe everything the prophets have said” // “To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”(Luke 24:25, Isaiah 8:20). God gave us a clear doctrine of the age of the earth in Scripture because He loves us and does not want us to be deceived. Therefore, those who reject what His Word says are without excuse. And, those who actively promote theistic-evolution are false prophets.

Because we are, “Justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” when the Bible tells us that Christ, “Was raised again for our justification,” it is not saying that all men were justified at the time of Christ’s resurrection. On the contrary, it is telling us that Christ was raised so that we might believe (Romans 3:28 and 4:25). In other words, if Christ had not risen we would have no reason to believe that He was successful.

4. THE PRIESTLY INTERCESSION OF CHRIST

As our high priest, Christ has not only made atonement for our sins, but also makes intercession for us before the throne of God. As it is written, “**He takes upon Himself the sins of many, and makes intercession for the those who transgress**” (Isaiah 53:12).

The words, “I do not pray for the world, but for those whom you have given to me,” the words “I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail,” and the words, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter,” tell us that Christ was making intercession for believers before His resurrection (John 17:9,

Luke 22:13, John 14:16). While the words, **“Who is there to condemn us? Christ who died, yea rather, who was raised from the dead, is at the right hand of God, and also intercedes for us,”** tell us that Christ continues to make intercession for us (Romans 8:34).

Christ’s words, **“It is finished,”** tell us that His work of intercession is not part of our atonement, the atonement is complete (John 19:30). The words, **“Jesus... endured the cross, indifferent to its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God,”** tell us that since His ascension Christ has been at the right hand of God (Hebrews 12:2). The words, **“He is able to completely save those who come to God through Him, because He ever lives to make intercession for them,”** tell us that He intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25). And, the words, **“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,”** speak of Christ not only as our intercessor, but also as our advocate [i.e. lawyer] before the throne of God (1John 2:1).

The words, **“For Christ did not enter a man made sanctuary, that is only a type of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor did He enter heaven in order to offer Himself often, as does the high priest who enters into the sanctuary every year with blood that is not his own; Otherwise He would have had to suffer many times since the world was made: but now He has appeared once at the close of history to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,”** tell us that Christ’s one sacrifice completed our atonement, that He did not enter heaven to continue that atonement, but He entered the heavenly temple [sanctuary] to apply His blood to the heavenly mercy seat for our forgiveness (Hebrews 9:24-26). As it is written, **“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (1Timothy 2:5). [See Lev. 16:14-15.]

C. THE KINGLY OFFICE OF CHRIST

The Bible not only testifies to Christ’s kingly office (His Lordship) by telling us that He is King, but by telling us that God has given Him dominion over all of creation. For example: when the Bible says, **“Jesus came to them, and said, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth,”** we need to realize that as God that power was always His (Matthew 28:18). Therefore, those words are telling us that because He is both God and man, His human nature shares that power. The words, **“Our Lord Jesus Christ... is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,”** tell us that He is the King of Kings (1Timothy 6:14-15). Ephesians 1:20-23 tells us that God set Christ, **“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 has put all things under His feet”**. The words, **“All things have been given to me by my Father,”** also tell us that “all things” are under

Christ's authority (Matthew 11:27). The words, **"The LORD has said to me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten you. Ask me, and I will give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession,"** again testify to Christ's dominion (Psalm 2:7-8). As do the words, **"You made Him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under His feet"** (Psalm 8:6). **"For God has put everything under His feet. But when He says that everything has been put under Him, it is evident that this does not include the one who put all things under Him"** (1Corinthians 15:27). [See Dan. 7:13-14, Psalm 110:2, Phil. 2:9-11.]

Although the words, **"God has put everything under His feet,"** tell us that Christ has one universal kingdom, theologians often speak of **His threefold kingdom**, the kingdom of power, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory (1Cor. 15:27). That is not because there are actually three different kingdoms, but because in governing He makes a distinction between the saved, the lost and those with Him in heaven. The words, **"The Lamb will conquer them: because He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and those who are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful,"** make a distinction between the lost [whom He will "conquer"], and the saved [who are with Him] (Revelation 17:14).

Strictly speaking, because God has put everything under Christ's feet, **all things are a part of Christ's kingdom of power.** However, we speak of the lost (including the fallen angels) as being under Christ's kingdom of power because they are not included in His kingdom of grace. As it is written, **"Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?"** (1Corinthians 6:9). In contrast, the words, **"He has rescued us from the power of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son,"** speak of the kingdom of grace, which excludes unbelievers (Colossians 1:13). And, the words, **"The Lord will rescue me [Paul] from every evil plot, and will save me for His heavenly kingdom,"** speak of the kingdom of glory, of which Paul was not yet a part (2Timothy 4:18).

The words, **"Jesus said to him, Truly, truly, I tell you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** // **"For whoever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith,"** tell us that we can only enter the kingdom of God through faith (John 3:3, 1John 5:4). And, since the kingdom of grace excludes unbelievers, the kingdom spoken of in these passages is the kingdom of grace. Moreover, the words, **"The kingdom of God is within you,"** apply to all who trust in Christ (Luke 17:21). **For, "Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise might be given to those who believe, through faith in Jesus Christ"** (Galatians 3:22).

Furthermore, because we enter Christ's kingdom of grace through faith in Him, every passage of Scripture that assures us of eternal life through faith in Christ is telling us that Christ's kingdom of glory is an extension of His kingdom of grace (or

verse versa). Passages like, **“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”** and, **“I was shown mercy... as an example for those who are going to trust in Him for everlasting life”** (John 3:14-15 and 1Timothy 1:16). Or the words, **“We believe that we will be saved through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Acts 15:11). Or, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”** (Acts 16:31). While the words, **“Father, I also want those, whom you have given me, to be with me where I am; and to see my glory, the glory that you have given me: because you loved me before the creation of the world,”** tell us that all who trust in Christ will experience the glory of heaven (John 17:24).

The words, **“If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him,”** tell us that Christ is at work in all who trust in Him (John 14:23). In contrast, the words, **“You formerly walked according to the way of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience,”** tell us that Satan is at work in all who do not trust in Christ (Ephesians 2:2). And, the words, **“We are now God’s children, but what we are going to be like has not yet been revealed: however we know that, when He appears, we will be like Him; for we will see Him as He is,”** tell us that what God has planned for those who trust in Him is more than we can even imagine (1John 3:2). **“As it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love Him”** (1Corinthians 2:9).

Because all power **“In heaven and in earth”** has been given to Christ, we know that He is in control (Matthew 28:18). Therefore, even though it often looks to us like Satan is in control, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus, knowing that, **“All things work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to His purpose”** (Romans 8:28). That is why it is written, **“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God: and those that exist are established by God”** (Romans 13:1). Now, of course, if political rulers begin to persecute Christians the words, **“We ought to obey God rather than men,”** apply (Acts 5:29). However, the words, **“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world,”** tell us that we should not take up arms against the government (2Corinthians 10:4). If two governments are fighting, that is a different matter, and sometimes Christians are called upon to bear arms. But, we should not attempt to spread the Gospel by violence. On the other hand, because Christ is in control, we can expect political rulers to protect the church, make the streets safe, and punish crime so that we are free to spread the Gospel while living, **“A quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”** (1Timothy 2:2). As it is written, **“Rulers are not a terror to those who do right, but to those who do evil”** and are **“Sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of those who do right”** (Romans 13:3, 1Peter 2:14). Moreover, the words, **“That is the**

foundation upon which I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it,” tell us that Christ’s church will prevail (Matthew 16:18). And the words, **“There is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved,”** tell us that there is no salvation apart from faith in Christ’s finished work, and His grace will never be withdrawn from the earth (Acts 4:12).

ERRORS REGARDING THE KINGLY OFFICE OF CHRIST

In our age, as in past ages, Satan is hard at work trying to lead people away from God’s word. In regard to Christ’s Kingly Office, what follows is a sampling of the many errors.

Those who deny that Christ is God not only deny that **“God was revealed in the flesh,”** but also deny that His kingdom is God’s kingdom (1Timothy 3:16). However, it is written, **“To the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever: and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom”** (Hebrews 1:8, Psalm 45:6).

Those who separate Christ’s human nature from His divine nature have claimed that He is king only according to His divine nature. However, the words, **“I will raise to David a righteous Branch... and this is the name by which He will be called, The LORD (Jahweh) Our Righteousness,”** tell us that the descendant (branch) of David is God “revealed in the flesh” (Jeremiah 23:5-6). [See 1Tim. 3:16.] And, the words, **“He [Jesus] will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God will give to him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will never end,”** tell us that it is the descendant of David (not just His divine nature) who is king (Luke 1:32-33).

Those who, **“Disregard the commandment [word] of God, and hold to the tradition of men,”** reject Christ’s authority by disregarding what He says (Mark 7:8). Those who teach, **“For doctrines the commandments [opinions] of men,”** reject Christ’s authority by adding to His Word when He has told us not to (Mark 7:7). [See Deut 4:2 and 12:32, Pr. 30:6, Rev.22:18-19 Matt. 15:9.]

Those who rebel against God by denying what the Bible says about the creation of the world, by explaining it away and twisting the Words of Scripture to fit their own man-made ideas about evolution, and by teaching the lie of theistic evolution and millions of years not only reject Christ as their king, but lie in His name. To all of them He says, **“O fools, and slow of heart to believe everything the prophets have said”** (Luke 24:25).

CHRIST ALONE