
Sermons of Truth and Reason



Complete and Detailed Outlines You Can Preach

Volume V

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In Which Direction Are You Looking?

Introduction

1. While driving a car, it is the better part of wisdom to look sharply in the direction you wish to go because serious wrecks have occurred and lives have been lost because the driver of a car was not looking in the proper direction.
2. Did anyone ever say to you, “Why don’t you look where you are going?” You were being rebuked for walking or bumping into something or someone you could have avoided if you had been looking in the right direction.
3. This same principle is involved and like caution is to be exercised in our lives as Christians—and even more so.
4. With that in mind, it will be profitable for us to examine and apply a few Biblical examples to see the importance, as Christians, of looking in the right direction.

I. Biblical Examples of Those Looking in the Wrong Direction

A. Lot’s wife. (Gen. 19:15-26)

1. Just before God destroyed the city of Sodom, Lot, his wife and two of their daughters were set outside of the city by angels. (15-16)
2. They were instructed not to look back. (17)
3. We do not know what prompted Lot’s wife to disobey.
 - a. She looked back and became a pillar of salt. (26)
 - b. Jesus:
 - 1) Used her sin as an example to motivate others to not look back. (Luke 17:32)
 - 2) Revealed the condition of one who looks back today. (Luke 9:62)

B. The children of Israel. (Num. 11:4-6)

1. Moses was leading them from their bondage in Egypt.
2. They complained about their food, even remembering—looking back— with pleasure to things they once loathed while in Egypt.
3. Occasionally we find someone in the church today who looks back and desires the things of the world.
 - a. Demas was guilty of this sin. (2 Tim. 4:10)
 - b. Christians are not to love the world. (1 John 2:15-17)
 - c. Christians are to come out of the world and be separate from those who are worldly (2 Cor. 6:17-18)

II. Biblical Examples of Those Looking in the Right Direction

A. Great heroes of the Bible were always looking forward.

1. That for which they were striving always occupied their full attention.
2. The goal before them was the incentive which kept them always looking to the future, never backward.

B. Abraham. (Heb. 11:8-10)

1. He considered himself a pilgrim, sojourner, in this world.
2. He dwelt in tents in the land of promise as if in a strange country.
3. His incentive: "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Heb. 11:10 - NIV)

C. Moses. (Heb. 11:24-26)

1. Moses was raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
2. Many, in his situation, would have seen only earthly wealth, fame and honor.
3. His respect for the future was enough to turn him in the right direction.
4. Is our respect for the "reward" of heaven great enough that we will fix our eyes in that direction and never look back?

D. The apostle Paul. (Phil. 3:4-15)

1. In the text, Paul lists things which, in the eyes of men, would have made him great.
 - a. He counted these things as worthless.
 - b. He gave them up in order to "gain Christ and be found in Him." (9-10)
2. Additionally, he states he did not rest on his past sacrifices thinking they were sufficient to receive his reward, rather he was constantly looking and going forward. (12-15a)

III. Our Direction

A. As Christians, we must ask ourselves in which direction are we looking.

B. The direction in which we ought to be looking is above. (Col. 3:1-3)

C. The incentive to look above.

1. The promise of eternal life. (Col. 3:4; John 10:27-28)
 - a. It is an exceedingly great promise. (2 Pet. 1:4)
 - b. It should be incentive enough to keep us looking forward and never backward.
2. Such an incentive:
 - a. Makes it so much easier to endure temptations, trials and afflictions.
 - b. Allows one to say with the apostle Paul, "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair... For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:8, 17-18)

Conclusion

1. In which direction are you looking?
2. Are you looking forward or backward?
3. Are you focusing on things temporal or eternal?
4. Determine to look forward to the eternal reward.

The New Birth

Text: John 3:1-7

Introduction

1. Nicodemus must have been surprised to learn that even a ruler of the Jews was not in the kingdom of God.
 - a. “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (v. 3)
 - b. Nicodemus asked how one could be born again.
2. Jesus explained the new birth in verse five.
 - a. Its two elements: water and Spirit.
 - b. Its necessity: one could not enter the kingdom of God without it.

I. Some “Suggestions” as to the Meaning of Water

- A. Some say it has reference to the natural birth.
 1. The water which cushions the fetus before birth, the release of which is a sign of approaching delivery.
 2. These say one must “exist,” be physically born, in order to be born spiritually.
- B. Some say it is not to be understood literally but figuratively, that it is a symbol.
 1. Calvin translated the passage, “water which is the Spirit.”
 2. The presence of figurative language in the Bible cannot be denied. Even “water” is sometimes used symbolically. (John 7:38)
 3. Three rules of Biblical interpretation of figurative language:
 - a. “The sense of the context will indicate it.” (D.R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, p. 195)
 - b. “A word or sentence is figurative when the literal meaning involves an impossibility.” (Ibid.)
 - c. “The language of Scripture may be regarded as figurative, if the literal interpretation will cause one passage to contradict another.” (Dungan, 196)
 - d. A summary of these three rules: A word is to be understood in its ordinary, literal sense unless something in the text or the rest of the Bible will not allow it.
 - e. The example of John 7:38. A literal interpretation would be absurd and nonsensical so it cannot be understood literally.
 4. What reason would there be for “water” in John 3:5 to be figurative?
 - a. Does anything in the context or other passages force a figurative application? It can be understood literally without causing the slightest difficulty.

- b. Would the literal application be an impossibility or an absurdity?
- c. Would it not make sense if understood literally?
- d. The only reason to make it figurative is because the literal application condemns the widely held position that baptism is not essential to salvation.

II. “Water” Refers to Baptism

A. “Water” can only refer to one thing: the water of the baptism of the great commission.
(Mark 16:16)

1. In baptism, a person is buried in water. (Acts 8:36; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12)
2. “Water is never present in any act connected with the kingdom of Christ, except one. But in that act it is always present, and never absent. That act is immersion.” (Moses E. Lard, *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, pp. 240-241)
3. “5. Born of water and the Spirit. The exposition of this much controverted passage does not fall within the scope of this work. We may observe, 1. That Jesus here lays down the preliminary conditions of entrance into His kingdom, expanding and explaining His statement in ver. 3. 2. That this condition is here stated as complex, including two distinct factors, *water* and *the Spirit*. 3. That the former of these two factors is not to be merged with the latter; that the *spiritual* element is not to exclude or obliterate the *external* and *ritual* element. We are not to understand with Calvin, the Holy Spirit as the purifying water in the spiritual sense: “*water which is the Spirit.*” 4. That *water* points definitely to the rite of baptism, and that with a twofold reference—to the past and to the future.” (*Vincent’s Word Studies*)
4. A.T. Robertson, Late Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky: “We are puzzled by the placing of ‘water’ here before ‘Spirit’ as a necessity to entering the Kingdom of God. But Nicodemus was troubled about ‘Spirit.’ He was thinking only of the physical birth. On the whole it is probable that by ‘water’ Jesus refers to baptism. John the Baptist preached repentance and practiced the baptism of those who confessed their sins. When Jesus repeats the point to Nicodemus he drops any mention of water: ‘You must be born again.’” (*Minor Characters in the New Testament*)
5. “If Brother Vaughn convinced us that born of water refers to anything but the baptism of one previously born of Spirit, we never *knew* it, and we would have owned it to him and to our readers. It means nothing else, and no Baptist that we ever heard or read of ever believed otherwise until A. Campbell frightened them away from an interpretation that is sustained by the consensus of all scholars of all denominations in all ages.” (*The Tennessee Baptist*, October 30, 1886, p. 5)
6. Parallel passages in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:26; and Titus 3:5.

B. An analogy to clarify this point.

1. Colossians 1:18. Jesus is referred to as the “firstborn from the dead.”
 - a. This is said in reference to His resurrection.
 - b. To arise from the dead is to be born from the dead.
2. In baptism there is a resurrection from the water. (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12)
 - a. The person is buried into water and arises from the water to walk in newness of life.
 - b. Resurrection from the dead is birth from the dead, resurrection from water is birth of water.

III. Baptism and the Kingdom

- A. John 3:5 justifies the conclusion that baptism is an essential part of the plan of salvation.
 1. One cannot be in the kingdom without being baptized.
 2. One cannot be saved without being in the kingdom.
- B. The kingdom of God is composed of all those who have submitted to the reign of God. (Col. 1:13-14)
 1. A person is either in the power of darkness or the kingdom of God. (Matt. 12:30)
 2. Those outside the kingdom are lost. Those in the kingdom are saved.
 3. Since baptism is essential to entrance into the kingdom, that makes it essential to salvation.

Conclusion

1. The new birth is something which has been experienced by all children of God in all ages since the death of Christ.
2. It involves a change in our relationship to God and our relationship to sin.
3. If you are in sin, become dead to sin and alive to Christ. Be born anew and become part of the kingdom of God.

Prepare to Meet Your God

Text: Amos 4:12

Introduction

1. The ending of one calendar year and the beginning of another is a time of both reflection and anticipation.
 - a. It also should be a time of preparation and purpose for it is not enough to anticipate the new year.
 - b. To live a worthwhile life, we cannot live aimlessly.
2. This time of year we make plans and preparation for the coming year.
 - a. We review the past year and note not only the things we have accomplished but also those things we have failed to accomplish.
 - b. We look to the future year and reflect on how we can achieve more, gain more, and make our lives more comfortable and happier.
 - c. We make resolutions to do better and live better and to give up some bad habits.
3. Since we are already thinking along these lines, I would like to discuss a kind of preparation that is far more important than preparing for a new year—preparing to meet our God.
 - a. The need for this preparation is universal. (Heb. 9:27; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10)
 - b. It seems many are interested in going to heaven but few are willing to make the necessary preparation to go there.
 - 1) Someone has said, “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.”
 - 2) One does not stumble into heaven or get there by accident.
 - 3) We must make preparation in this life for the life to come.

I. The Context and Setting of Our Lesson Text - Amos 4:12

A. The context.

1. The text is a solemn warning to the people of the Northern kingdom of Israel.
2. Though issued to those people in the long ago, its principle is one to which we should give attention because we must remember that what happened to the people of God back then can happen to us today. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11)

B. The time.

1. The date of the text is about 755 B.C.
2. It was during the reign of Jeroboam II who ruled over Israel from 793 to 753 B.C.
3. It was a time of prosperity and expansion in Israel because Jeroboam II was a powerful and able king.

- a. He regained much of the territory that had been lost to other nations bringing the kingdom near to its size during the reign of Solomon.
- b. Some have described this time, though, as the “Indian Summer” of Israel—a brief time of prosperity before their fall.

C. The setting.

1. Israel’s material prosperity had not been matched spiritually.
 - a. As a nation they had forgotten God.
 - b. There was, therefore, a need for Amos’ warning.
2. Israel had an outward form of worship which had no influence on their lives.
 - a. They only superficially went through the motions of worship.
 - b. Their religious and social conditions were very similar to what we see in our society today.
 - c. There was justification for God to be angry with them and disapprove of their lives.
3. God had punished Israel in order to bring about their repentance by sending a drought, famine, pestilence, and an earthquake. (Amos 4:6-11)
4. God sent Amos to warn Israel of the coming judgment and doom.
 - a. God gave them time to prepare.
 - b. Sadly, it was all to no avail for they were overrun and destroyed by the Assyrians, who served as God’s instrument to execute His judgment upon Israel, in 721 B.C.

D. As Israel was warned to “Prepare to meet your God,” so is man today.

II. New Testament Warnings Which Indicate Now Is the Time to Prepare for Eternity

- A. Matthew 25 contains three accounts that illustrate this life is a time of preparation.
 1. The ten virgins. (1-13)
 2. Talents. (14-30)
 3. Judgment. (31-46)
- B. Consider the teachings of Matthew 6:19-20; Titus 2:11-15; and Hebrews 2:3.
- C. Now is the time for preparation for there will be a time of reckoning and recompense when all must stand before God. (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12)
- D. In spite of warnings in Scripture, how sad it is that the majority of people:
 1. Live without God.
 2. Have no fear of God.
 3. Set at naught God’s authority.
 4. Do not observe God’s works or mark His judgments.
 5. Live and act as if there were no God.

III. The Kind of Preparation Needed: Scriptural

- A. Scriptural preparation is essential to be properly prepared to meet God.
 1. One cannot properly prepare to meet God if he will not prepare in accordance with God’s way. (Matt. 7:21; Jer. 10:23; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3)

2. One cannot mix his ways, or the ways of other men, with the way of God. (Rev. 22:18-19)

B. Scriptural preparation consists of:

1. Faith in Christ. (Heb. 11:6; John 3:16; 8:24)
2. True repentance. (Acts 17:30)
3. Confession of faith in Christ. (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10)
4. Baptism for remission of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)
5. A life of faithful service. (Rom. 12:1-2; Rev. 2:10)

Conclusion

1. You can make no better resolution for the new year than to live each day in accordance with the will of God so that you will be prepared to meet Him when the time comes.
2. Ask yourself, "Am I prepared to meet God?"
3. If not, why not begin your preparations today?

What Time Is It?

Introduction

1. The title of our lesson is probably one of the most frequently asked questions of all of us and by all of us.
 - a. Our answers to this question may vary.
 - b. In reality, the answer is always the same: "The time is now."
2. "Now" is the time we have to:
 - a. Live our lives.
 - b. Accomplish the Lord's will.
 - c. Prepare ourselves for eternity.
3. Since the Bible devotes a great deal of attention to the subject of time, this lesson will ask the question, "What time is it?" and then look to see how the Bible responds.

I. The Response of 2 Corinthians 6:2

- A. "Now" is the accepted time for salvation
- B. All things are ready.
 1. The "fullness of time" has come. (Gal. 4:4)
 2. The invitation has been extended. (Matt. 11:28-30)
 - a. This invitation is depicted in Matthew 22:1-10 as an invitation to a wedding feast.
 - b. We often sing, "All things are ready, come to the feast."
 3. The church has been established. (Matt. 16:18)
 - a. The saved can be added to it. (Acts 2:47)
 - b. You can be in it. (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18, 24)
 4. The gospel has been revealed.
 - a. It was put in force by the death of Jesus. (Heb. 9:16-17)
 - b. It is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16)
 - c. It contains all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3)
- C. "Now" may be the only time you have. (Jas. 4:13-14)
 1. There is no promise of a tomorrow and no going back to yesterday.
 2. Psalm 103:15-16. "As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more."
 3. The brevity and uncertainty of life are ever-present realities that must be acknowledged by every individual.

II. Responses From Romans 13:11-14

- A. "Now" is the time to awake out of sin. (11)
 1. This refers, not to a natural sleep or the sleep of death, but to an awakening from moral sleep.

2. How does one awake out of sin? The answer is found in Ephesians 5:1-14.
 3. There is good reason to awake: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." (12)
- B. "Now" is the time to lay aside all sin. (12)
1. To "cast off" means to take off or remove, as clothing.
 - a. It is used literally in Acts 7:58.
 - b. It is used figuratively of sin and sinfulness. One is to:
 - 1) Put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy and filthy language. (Col. 3:8)
 - 2) Lay aside all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking. (1 Pet. 2:1)
 - 3) Lay aside all filthiness and overflow (abundance) of wickedness. (Jas. 1:21)
 - 4) Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts. (Eph. 4:22)
 2. The deeds of darkness must stop. (12)
 - a. This refers to spiritual darkness.
 - b. This is to be done or should have been done at conversion.
 - 1) Some try to continue in sin. (Rom. 6:1)
 - 2) One cannot continue in sin and still be saved eternally. (Rom. 6:2)
- C. "Now" is the time to put your life on God's side ("...put on the armor of light"). (12)
1. This is an allusion to the spiritual garb a Christian is to wear. (Eph. 6:13-17)
 2. The Christian must shed evil and take up the battle of God.
 - a. He must be willing to endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ. (2 Tim. 2:3)
 - b. He is to fight the good fight of faith. (1 Tim. 6:12)
- D. "Now" is the time to walk properly. (13)
1. The conduct of a Christian is to be decent and appropriate to his name and calling.
 - a. He is to walk "circumspectly" (carefully) and wisely ("redeeming the time"). (Eph. 5:15-17)
 - b. There is a proper way for one to conduct himself when he is a member of the house of God. (1 Tim. 3:14-15)
 2. The proper life for a Christian is described in verse 13 of this text.
 - a. "Walk...as in the day." Light exposes all activities.
 - b. Things which oppose the right way to walk.
 - 1) Revelry and drunkenness.
 - 2) Lewdness (KJV & ASV: "chambering;" unchaste conduct with the opposite sex) and lust (KJV & ASV: "wantonness").
 - 3) Strife and envy (jealousy).

E. "Now" is the time to put on Christ. (14)

1. One clothes himself with Christ at baptism. (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3)
2. One also puts on Christ in righteous living. (1 Pet. 2:21)
 - a. The Christian's life is to mirror the life of Christ.
 - b. The Christian must be and do all that Christ requires.

Conclusion

1. What time is it?
2. It is "now."
3. "Now" is the time to obey.

Why God Gave Man the Bible

Introduction

1. God has a purpose in everything He does.
 - a. He has never engaged in idleness.
 - b. He has never done something just for the sake of doing it.
2. God has a purpose(s) in giving the Bible to man.
 - a. Those purposes will be accomplished.
 - b. “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.’” (Isa. 55:8-11)
3. In this lesson we will explore some of the reasons God gave man the Bible especially considering those which pertain to man’s salvation.

I. To Tell Man He Is Lost

- A. If God had not given man the Bible, man would not know:
 2. About heaven, hell or sin.
 3. He is lost.
 4. He has a need for a Savior.
- B. Every effort to save man has been and will continue to be futile until he is made to recognize he is lost and needs salvation.
 1. As the person who has a physical illness must know of that illness and that he is in need of medical attention, the sinner must know of his spiritual sickness and see his need for salvation.
 2. Until one recognizes that he needs to be saved from his lost condition, he will never make the changes that he must make in his life to effect his salvation.
- C. Sin dooms man to be lost.
 1. God created man as a pure, upright being. (Eccl. 7:29)
 2. When man disobeyed God and sinned, he was separated from God. (Gen. 3:23-24)
 3. As sin separated the first man from God, sin separates man from God today. (Isa. 59:1-2; Eph. 2:12)
 - a. Man, because of his sins, is lost and doomed to eternal death—separation from God in the place of eternal punishment. (Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41-46)
 - b. How would man have known this if God had not given him the Bible?

II. To Assure Man That He Desires All to Be Saved

- A. The Bible clearly states that it is the desire of God that all be saved. (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9)
- B. Truth, the word of God (John 17:17), is His means of salvation.
 - 1. It is His power unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16)
 - 2. It has the power to free men from sin. (John 8:32)
 - 3. It thoroughly furnishes man with all he needs to know in relation to life and godliness. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3)
- C. In the Bible one learns of the wonderful love God manifested toward mankind.
 - 1. His love allowed His Son to die as a sacrifice for sin. (John 3:16-17; Rom. 5:8)
 - 2. Such shows God's intense desire for the salvation of every soul.
- D. The Bible reveals that Christ built His church to stand forever as a haven of refuge for all who would obey Him and be saved. (Matt. 16:18-19)
 - 1. Every soul that is saved is added to it. (Acts 2:47)
 - 2. The Bible shows people how they may be a part of Christ's church.

III. To Explain All He Has Done to Save Man

- A. God created man an intelligent being.
 - 1. Man is able to reason, study and understand. (Gen. 1:26)
 - 2. God gave man the Bible to read and study so that he might learn and understand the way of salvation.
- B. The way of salvation.
 - 1. In the Old Testament:
 - a. God chose Abraham from whom He would develop a nation of people. (Gen. 12:1-3)
 - b. God cultivated and tutored that nation for hundreds of years that through it He might bring the Savior, Jesus Christ, into the world.
 - 1) He blessed them when they were obedient but severely punished them when they departed from His way.
 - 2) We know all of this because God has given it to us in the Bible so that we might benefit from it. (1 Cor. 10:7-11; Rom. 15:4)
 - c. Shadows, types, prophecies and promises are found which find their fulfillment in the New Testament.
 - 2. In the New Testament one learns:
 - a. Of the sacrificial death, the victorious resurrection and the glorious coronation of Christ as king over His kingdom. (Acts 2:22-36)
 - b. Of the establishment of the church. (Acts 2:1ff)
 - c. That the word of God has been given to serve as man's infallible guide in all matters pertaining to life and godliness. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3)
- C. All this was done by God to save man from sin.

IV. To Reveal the Meaning of Salvation

- A. Many people today either completely misunderstand or only partially understand the great subject of salvation.
 - 1. There is no excuse for either of the above situations.
 - 2. God has revealed His way of salvation in such a way that all can understand it. (Eph. 3:1-5)
- B. The Bible reveals:
 - 1. The meaning of salvation. When one complies with God's conditions of pardon, all his sins are forgiven never to be remembered against him.
 - 2. The destiny of salvation. The end of the way of salvation is an eternal home in heaven and a crown of life.
 - 3. The method of salvation. The method by which one is saved is belief in and obedience to Jesus Christ.

V. To Reveal What One Must Do to Be Saved

- A. From the beginning of time, God has always revealed what He desires of man.
- B. The Bible reveals that the principle which effects salvation has been the same in every dispensation.
 - 1. Fear God and keep His commandments. (Eccl. 12:13)
 - 2. Fear God and work righteousness. (Acts 10:34-35)
- C. God has revealed in the gospel what people must now do to be saved.
 - 1. One must obey Jesus Christ and His gospel. (Heb. 5:8-9)
 - 2. In order to be saved, one must:
 - a. Hear the gospel, the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)
 - b. Believe in both Father and Son. (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24)
 - c. Repent of his sins. (Acts 17:30-31)
 - d. Confess his faith in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 10:10; Matt. 10:32)
 - e. Be baptized for the remission of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)

VI. To Reveal What One Must Do to Keep Saved

- A. The Lord realized His disciples would need help to keep saved.
 - 1. He understood they would be surrounded with worldly influences and that temptation would be strong.
 - 2. He knew that the cares, riches and pleasures of this life would tempt many to leave Him.
- B. Jesus prayed to the Father in behalf of His disciples that God might "Sanctify them by Your truth: Your word is truth." (John 17:17)
 - 1. This prayer reveals how one may remain saved.

2. To “sanctify” means to set apart or separate from the world and to consecrate oneself to God.
 - a. This is accomplished by the word of God.
 - b. When one applies the word of God to himself and lives by it, he is in fellowship with both the Father and Son (2 John 9), and thus has salvation.
 - c. One must keep the commands of God being faithful even to the point of death (Rev. 2:10) and he will receive the crown of life at the final day.

Conclusion

1. God’s purpose in giving man the Bible is only fulfilled when each person learns its message and applies it to his life so that he might have the salvation of his soul.
2. Have you obeyed the word of God so that you might have your sins forgiven and be saved?

The Christian's Hope

Introduction

1. Alexander Pope, the English poet who lived from 1688-1744, penned the famous words, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast..."
2. Whether on the battlefield or at the sickbed of a loved one, no words in the English language are more devastating than, "There is no hope."
3. Dante, in *The Inferno*, said the sign over the gate to hell reads, "Abandon all hope ye who enter here."
4. Of all people who are living, the Christian is the only one who has true hope.
 - a. Romans 15:4. "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."
 - b. Romans 15:13. "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
5. In this lesson, we are going to present and analyze the hope of the Christian.

I. Hope Defined

- A. The dictionary defines hope as "desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment." (*Webster's 7th New Collegiate Dictionary*)
- B. According to Scripture, hope is an integral part of one's faith. (Heb. 11:1)
 1. Moffatt, in translating Hebrews 11:1, said, "Now faith means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see."
 2. Hope is linked with faith because faith is the ground of our hope and hope is the object of our faith. (1 Cor. 13:13)
- C. It is:
 1. A hope of eternal life. (Titus 1:2; 3:7)
 2. A hope of salvation. (1 Thes. 5:8; Rom. 8:24-25)
 3. A hope laid up in heaven. (Col. 1:5)
 4. A hope of resurrection from the dead. (Acts 23:6)
 5. The hope of the gospel. (Col. 1:23)
 - The hope of the fulfillment of all the promises presented in the gospel.
 6. The hope of His calling. (Eph. 1:18; 4:4)
 - The prospect before those who respond to His call in the gospel.
 7. Hope that is:
 - a. Good. (2 Thes. 2:16)
 - b. Blessed. (Titus 2:13)

- c. Living. (1 Pet. 1:3)
- d. Glorious. (Col. 1:27)
- e. Sure. (Heb. 6:19)
- f. Steadfast. (Heb. 6:19)
- g. The anchor of the soul. (Heb. 6:19)

II. Why Do We Hope?

- A. Because God, who cannot lie, promised it. (Titus 1:2)
 - 1. He is “the God of hope.” (Rom. 15:13)
 - 2. He “confirmed it by an oath.” (Heb. 6:17-19)
 - 3. It was given through God’s grace. (2 Thes. 2:16)
- B. Because of Jesus.
 - 1. He is our hope. (1 Tim. 1:1)
 - 2. Because of His resurrection, we also have hope for the resurrection. (1 Pet. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:12-20)

III. Who Can Have This Hope

- A. Those who are in Christ. (1 Thes. 4:13-14)
 - 1. Out of Him, there is no hope. (Eph. 2:12)
 - 2. One is placed in Him by baptism. (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3)
- B. Those whom Christ is in. (Col. 1:27)
 - 1. When one is baptized into Christ, he puts on Christ. (Gal. 3:27)
 - 2. Christ lives in the Christian. (Gal. 2:20)
- C. Those who have been begotten. (1 Pet. 1:3)
 - 1. Those who are born of water and the Spirit. (John 3:3-5)
 - 2. Those who have been cleansed by the washing of regeneration. (Titus 3:5)
- D. Those who are justified. (Titus 3:7)
 - 1. One is justified by faith. (Rom.5:1; Gal. 3:24)
 - 2. One is justified by the blood of Jesus. (Rom. 5:9)
 - One contacts the blood of Jesus in baptism. (Rom. 6:1-5)

IV. Those Who Have This Hope Must:

- A. Purify themselves. (1 John 3:3)
- B. Rejoice in their hope. (Rom. 12:12)
- C. Remain steadfast. (Heb. 6:18-19; Rom. 5:3-5)
- D. Wait. (Gal. 5:5)
- E. Be righteous. (Gal. 5:5)
- F. Have boldness of speech. (2 Cor. 3:12)
- G. Be ready to answer anyone regarding it. (1 Pet. 3:15)

Conclusion

1. God has given the hope of eternal life to those who live faithfully in Jesus Christ.
2. Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774), the Irish writer and physician and son of an Anglican cleric, wrote:

“Hope, like a gleaming taper’s light,
Adorns and cheers our way;
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.”

3. Let us never give up hope.
4. Rather, let us lay hold on life eternal.

Sowing and Reaping

Text: Revelation 14:14-16

Introduction

1. God's law of sowing and reaping is stated in Galatians 6:7-9.
 - a. This is an immutable, unchangeable, law.
 - b. It applies in both the physical and spiritual realms.
2. Every person is a "sower" who will reap the harvest of his own planting.
 - a. The world is full of heartbroken "reapers" who thought they could sow one thing and reap another.
 - b. Hosea 8:7. "They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind."
3. This lesson will consider the law of sowing and reaping to show there is a direct correlation between what is sown and what is reaped especially as it applies to those things which are spiritual.

I. Sowing the Word of God vs. Sowing the Commandments of Men

- A. Sowing the word of God will produce the kingdom of God.
 1. In the parable of the sower, the seed is the word of God. (Luke 8:11)
 2. When the word of God was preached on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, it produced Christians.
 3. That same word, no matter when or where it is preached, if it falls on good and honest hearts, will have the same result.
- B. Sowing the commandments of men brings vain religion. (Matt. 15:9)
 1. The doctrines and teachings of men produce a plant that will be rooted up. (Matt. 15:13)
 2. One must not mix the commandments of men with the pure word of God for one who does reaps condemnation. (Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18)

II. One Who Sows to the Flesh Will Reap Corruption - Galatians 6:7-8

- A. This epistle was written to Christians thus these verses are a warning to Christians.
 1. Contrary to what Calvinists teach, it is possible for a Christian to so fall as to "reap corruption" and lose his soul.
 2. Consider the teachings of Job 4:8 and Proverbs 22:8.
- B. How does one sow to the flesh?
 1. By doing "the works of the flesh." (Gal. 5:19-21)
 - a. One who engages in these works is sowing to the flesh.
 - b. One who practices these things "will not inherit the kingdom of God."

2. By teaching false doctrines, “heresies.” (Gal. 5:20)
 - a. Heresy. “An opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects: Such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage.” (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*)
 - b. All denominations, sects, cults, etc., are the results of false teaching.
3. By sowing discord among brethren.
 - a. Sowing discord produces “calamity.” (Prov. 6:12-15)
 - b. God despises one who sows discord. (Prov. 6:16-19)
 - c. Contentious words are a source of trouble whenever they are uttered.
 - d. Contentious words tear down but we are to build up. (Eph. 4:29-32)
 - e. A contentious person causes heartache, strife and unhappiness wherever he goes.
 - 1) But he brings the greatest woe upon himself.
 - 2) “Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy.” (Prov. 6:15)

III. Sowing Bountifully or Sparingly

- A. All want to reap a bountiful eternal harvest when they stand before the judgment seat of God but that depends on not only what they sow but also how they sow. (2 Cor. 9:6)
- B. One who sows sparingly of his time, abilities, resources, and righteous works deprives himself of the abundant life here and the eternal harvest of heaven. (Matt. 25:14-40)
- C. So many who claim to be Christians wonder why they are not happy or wonder what is wrong with their lives.
 1. It could be they are not getting much out of life because they are not putting much into it.
 2. Christians are to be “abounding in the work of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58)
 3. Consider the examples of Dorcas in Acts 9:36-39 and the worthy woman in Proverbs 31:10-31.

IV. He Who Sows Righteousness Will Have a Sure Reward

- A. Proverbs 11:18. “The wicked man does deceptive work, But he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward.”
- B. This is the substance of a righteous life.
 1. A lifetime of sowing, working, striving, praying, enduring heartaches, helping others, etc., brings an eternity of joyous reaping. (Gal. 6:8)
 2. It is the same as sowing to the Spirit.
 - a. One sows to the Spirit by obeying the teachings of the Spirit.
 - b. If we want a sure reward, we must sow to the Spirit—work righteousness (Acts 10:34-35), keep the commandments of God. (Eccl. 12:13)

Conclusion

1. Only those who are servants of the Master can properly sow. (Matt. 7:21ff)
 - a. Now is the time to start sowing to the Spirit.
 - b. We must sow to the Spirit to reap eternal life.
2. The life in Christ brings great blessings on earth and an eternal harvest of joy in heaven.

Fruit of the Spirit - The Nature of God

Introduction

1. The one who is in Christ is a new creation. (2 Cor. 5:17)
2. The Christian is to be transformed from one who is worldly into one who is godly. (Rom. 12:1-2)
3. The Christian is to be like God.
 - a. Those who are led by the Spirit are "sons of God." (Rom. 8:14)
 - b. "Sons" = those like unto. (cf. John 8:44)
4. The Spirit has a major role in transforming the Christian into one who is "like unto" God.

I. The Transformation from Worldly to Godly

- A. Those in Christ are to walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:1-14a)
- B. Christians are to be led by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:12-17)
- C. Christians are to put off the old man and put on the new man. (Eph. 4:17-24)
- D. Christians are to produce the fruit of the Spirit, that which evidences they are living for God. (Gal. 5:22-23)
 1. The fruit of the Spirit stands in stark contrast to the "works of the flesh." (Gal. 5:19-21)
 2. Note the difference between "fruit," singular, and "works," plural.
 - a. Any one of the "works" of the flesh is enough to bring condemnation.
 - b. But all of the "fruit" of the Spirit must be a part of one's life if he is going to grow unto salvation, grow to be like God.
- E. By producing the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, Christians become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4)
 1. "The object of all God's promises and dispensations was to bring fallen man back to the image of God, which he had lost. This, indeed, is the sum and substance of the religion of Christ. We have partaken of an earthly, sensual, and devilish nature; the design of God by Christ is to remove this, and to make us partakers of the Divine nature; and save us from all the corruption in principle and fact which is in the world..." (Adam Clarke commenting on 2 Peter 1:4)
 2. One becomes a partaker of the divine nature by producing the fruit of the Spirit because those things which comprise the fruit of the Spirit are, in fact, qualities of God.

II. The Fruit of the Spirit = Qualities of God (Galatians 5:22-23)

- A. Love. "God is love." (1 John 4:8, 16)
- B. Joy. "He will rejoice over you with gladness." (Zeph. 3:17; cf. Deut. 30:9; Isa. 62:5; 65:17-19)

- C. Peace. "Now the God of peace be with you all." (Rom. 15:33; cf. Heb. 13:20)
- D. Longsuffering. "The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy..." (Num. 14:18; cf. Ex. 34:6; Psa. 86:15; Rom. 2:4)
- E. Kindness. "His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:4-7; cf. Neh. 9:17; Titus 3:3-7)
- F. Goodness. "Oh, how great is Your goodness..." (Psa. 31:19; cf. Psa. 27:13; 52:1; 68:10; Rom. 11:22)
- G. Faithfulness. "Great is Your faithfulness." (Lam. 3:23; cf. Psa. 36:5; 89:1-2; 119:90; Rom. 3:3)
- H. Gentleness. "Your gentleness has made me great." (2 Sam. 22:36; cf. Psa. 18:35; 2 Cor. 10:1)
- I. Self-control.
 - 1. In regard to sin. "God cannot be tempted by evil..." (Jas. 1:13)
 - 2. In regard to His emotions. "So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people." (Ex. 32:1-14; esp. v. 14)

Conclusion

1. In the word of God the Spirit has given to mankind, God has not only revealed His will but also Himself and His nature.
2. Christians are to take on that nature and grow to be more and more like God Himself: "Be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:16)
 - a. To be holy is to be set apart from the world and the worldly.
 - b. To be holy is to be devoted to God in all things.
3. We can know whether or not we are taking on those qualities by which we will be godly if we can see evidence of "the fruit of the Spirit" in our lives.

Compassion, Kindness and Forgiveness

Introduction

1. Every follower of Jesus must be impressed with the basic attitudes and feelings toward others which He taught and exemplified.
 - a. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus emphasized and illustrated His desire to change people's attitudes to conform to those which He possessed.
 - b. Those attitudes not only affect one's relationship with Jesus but also relationships with others.
2. One cannot, in reality, be a Christian without the proper attitudes and conduct toward others. (Matt. 22:34-39)
3. A fundamental portrayal of the attitudes which are needed is seen in Colossians 3:1-15.
 - a. The "new man" of Colossians 3 is to be continually developed after the likeness of the Lord.
 - b. Three of the outstanding qualities and desirable attitudes presented in this passage and exemplified by the Lord are compassion, kindness and forgiveness.

I. Compassion

- A. Compassion reflects the deepest of human feelings.
- B. The example of Jesus.
 1. He was moved with compassion on the multitudes. (Matt. 9:36; 14:14)
 2. Hebrews 4:15. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."
 - a. The King James Version and American Standard Version translate "sympathize with" as "touched with."
 - b. Jesus is touched by, feels compassion for and is able to sympathize with our infirmities.
- C. Children of God need to have deep compassion for each other. (1 Pet. 3:8)
 1. In physical and material circumstances.
 2. In spiritual weaknesses. (Gal. 6:1-2; Rom. 15:1)
 3. In stressful situations in the congregation.
- D. Some, who claim to be Christians, tend to be "hard-nosed," uncaring and unfeeling.
 1. A lack of compassion shows that the person is really not converted.
 2. Consider "love" as it is presented in 1 Corinthians 13:7. Love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

II. Kindness

- A. A Christian is a kind person who constantly manifests a "kindly spirit."
- B. Kindness is enjoined on the Christian.
 1. Ephesians 4:32. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."

2. It is a part of the "love" that should characterize the Christian. (1 Cor. 13:4)
 3. Kindness is part of the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22)
 4. As part of the "new man" in Christ, the Christian is to put on kindness. (Col. 3:12)
 5. Kindness is to be added to faith. (2 Pet. 1:7)
- C. This quality is needed:
1. In business meetings when there is a difference of opinion.
 2. In Bible classes when there is a difference of understanding.
 3. In preaching. One cannot allow unkind, bitter remarks and feelings to take over his message.
 4. In personal comments.
 - a. Face-to-face.
 - b. About another person (including such things as gossip).
 5. In order to be a person of goodwill and love.

III. Forgiveness

- A. This attitude is a must for every Christian.
1. Ephesians 4:32. "Forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."
 2. Colossians 3:13. "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."
 3. The principle found in verse 12 of the model prayer in Matthew 6:9-13.
 - a. "Forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."
 - b. The importance of applying this principle is seen in verses 14 and 15. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
- B. The attitude of forgiveness is plainly manifested by those we should emulate.
1. Jesus. (Luke 23:34)
 2. Stephen. (Acts 7:60)
 3. Paul. (2 Tim. 4:16)
- C. The attitude of being willing to forgive others, even enemies, is closely related to the spiritual love taught and demonstrated by Jesus. (cf. Matt. 5:43-48)
1. It stands in contrast to grudges, "chips-on-the-shoulder," hatred, bitterness, revenge and other sinful attitudes.
 2. A forgiving spirit will prevent these wrong feelings from developing.
- D. This forgiving spirit should be the result of an appreciation for the forgiveness of sins which the Christian enjoys through the sacrifice of Jesus. (Col. 3:13)
- E. Many who claim to be Christians are unforgiving because they have a selfish, inward view of life.
1. They feel sorry for themselves most of the time.
 2. They feed on hurt feelings and criticism of other people.
- F. If one is going to be like Jesus, he must develop a forgiving spirit.

Conclusion

1. Do you feel compassion? Are you kind? Do you have a forgiving spirit?
2. If the answer is “no,” I do not know whose name you should be wearing but it is not the name of Jesus Christ.
3. Those who are truly Christians, those who are following the teachings and example of Jesus, are compassionate, kind and forgiving persons.

Jesus Christ: The Son of God

Introduction

1. One of the basic precepts of the faith we hold dear is believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. (Acts 8:37; John 8:24)
2. That Jesus is the Son of God is the theme of New Testament teaching and preaching.
3. Yet, there has always been controversy concerning Jesus' identity. (John 7:12)
4. An abundance of evidence can be presented to show that Jesus Christ, as stated in Scripture, is the Son of God.
5. As the apostle John, John 20:30-31, stated his purpose in penning his gospel, he, in reality, was stating the very reasons that all Scripture was revealed—to redeem man and to show him that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the one through whom forgiveness of sins and redemption is possible.
6. This lesson will examine some of the evidence to see if Jesus is truly the Son of God.

I. An Erroneous Contemporary View

- A. An erroneous view that some have about Jesus today is that He was not really the Son of God but He was a good man.
 1. This was a view held by some during Jesus' life on earth. (John 7:12)
 2. If He was not the Son of God, He was not a good man.
- B. If Jesus was not the Son of God:
 1. He was nothing but a liar.
 - a. Consider John 12:44-50. He said the Father had revealed that He was the Son and the one sent to save the world.
 - b. If He was not that one, He lied and a good man does not lie.
 2. He could not and will not give what He promised to give—eternal life.
 - a. If He is not the Son of God, He cannot provide forgiveness of sins, fellowship with the Father and, ultimately, eternal life.
 - b. That would mean that all He has enjoined upon those who serve Him would be meaningless and fruitless.
 - 1) All of the sacrifice, anguish, heartache, suffering and persecution would be for nothing.
 - 2) Would a good man do that to anyone?
- C. But I believe that Jesus was more than just a good man.
 1. I believe He is the Son of God.
 2. I believe His promise is true.
 3. The testimony supporting His claims and my belief in Him is overwhelming.

II. The Testimony for Jesus Christ as the Son of God

A. The testimony of men: His contemporaries.

1. John the Baptist.
 - a. He was to fulfill the role of forerunner of the Messiah. (Luke 1:17)
 - b. He was fully convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. (John 1:29-34)
2. The apostle Peter.
 - a. He was closely associated with Jesus during His ministry.
 - b. He gave testimony as to the identity of Jesus. (Matt. 16:15-16)
 - 1) Jesus blessed him for this confession.
 - 2) "Flesh and blood" had not revealed this fact to him but the "Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 16:17)
3. Nathanael.
 - a. He did not believe any good thing could come out of Nazareth. (John 1:43-46)
 - 1) Philip identified Christ as "Jesus of Nazareth."
 - 2) It could be that Nathanael knew of Micah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2; cf. John 7:40-42, 52)
 - b. Yet, he was overwhelmed by the evidence and convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. (John 1:47-50)
4. Martha.
 - a. When Jesus came to raise her brother Lazarus from the dead, she expressed her faith in Jesus on what she had heard and seen before.
 - b. She believed Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of God, who is come into the world." (John 11:27)
5. The centurion who helped crucify Jesus.
 - a. The testimony of those previously cited may be considered biased by some people because all of these witnesses were sympathetic to Jesus and His cause—this man was not.
 - b. This man witnessed those things surrounding the crucifixion and death of Jesus.
 - 1) He watched Him on the cross and heard the things He said.
 - 2) He saw the earthquake and other unusual physical phenomena that took place at His death.
 - c. He simply said, "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. 27:54)

B. The testimony of the spirit world.

1. Angels knew who he was.
 - a. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35)
 - b. Before Jesus was born, an angel told Joseph who He was. (Matt. 1:20-25)
2. Even demons acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God. (Mark 1:21-24)

C. The testimony of Jesus' works—His miracles.

1. The miracles of Jesus served a two-fold purpose.
 - a. They helped those who were their beneficiaries.
 - b. They gave strong reason for believing in Christ and His claims.
2. His miracles were performed openly for all to see so that even His enemies could not deny His power. (John 11:47-48)
3. His works proved He was from the Father.
 - a. The testimony of Nicodemus. (John 3:2)
 - b. The testimony of Jesus Himself. (John 5:36)

D. The testimony of the Scriptures—prophecy.

1. The Scriptures provide one of the most powerful proofs of the deity of Jesus.
2. Jesus used the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah to prove that He was the Christ. (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39-40)
3. Jesus fulfilled all of the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Christ, made long before He ever came to earth, down to the smallest detail.
 - a. There is no possibility they could have been fulfilled by mere accident.
 - b. It would have been impossible for Him to have fulfilled all of the over 300 prophecies if He had not been the Messiah, the Son of God.

E. The testimony of the Father.

1. At Jesus' baptism. (Matt. 3:17)
2. At the transfiguration. (Matt. 17:5)

Conclusion

1. With all the evidence that God has given, no one should doubt that Jesus is the Son of God.
2. "Now there was, about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews and also of the Gentiles. This was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the instigation of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him from the first did not cease to adhere to him. For he appeared to them alive the third day, the divine prophets having foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so name for him subsists to this time." (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 28, chapter 3, section 3)
3. Is Jesus Christ the Son of God? To answer, we make application of the words of Gamaliel found in Acts 5:30-39.
 - a. If there had been nothing to Jesus, He would have come to naught.
 - b. But He did not come to naught because He was, and is, the Son of God.

Jesus Christ: The Son of Man

Introduction

1. John 1:1, 14. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."
2. Matthew 1:23. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'"
3. Philippians 2:5-8. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."
4. Many have a difficult time reconciling the dual nature of Jesus while He was upon the earth, that He was both man and God.
 - a. The Gnostics of the 1st century.
 - 1) Since they thought flesh was intrinsically evil, they believed that God could not come in the flesh.
 - 2) They had many explanations to solve what they believed to be a dilemma
 - b. Modernists of today who look to Him as "just a good man" do not recognize His deity.
 - c. "Johannes Weiss tells us that it is unthinkable that Godhood and manhood should be united in a single person walking upon the earth; that, while no doubt man of ancient time could conceive 'that a man might really be an incarnate deity,' modern men feel much too strongly the impassable barrier which separates the divine and the human to entertain such a notion." (Benjamin Warfield, *Person and Work of Christ*, p. 211)
5. Both natures, divine and human, can be found in Christ without a conflict between them.

I. The Son of Man - Matthew 8:20

- A. "Son of man" is a self-designation frequently used by Jesus. (Matt. 16:13)
 1. It is used some 85 times in the New Testament, 81 of those by Jesus.
 2. Four exceptions.
 - a. John 12:34. The multitude questions Jesus' use of the term.
 - b. Acts 7:56. It is used by Stephen.
 - c. Rev. 1:13 and 14:14. It is used by John.
- B. The meaning of the term remains an enigma.
 1. Neither Jesus nor His apostles ever explained its significance.
 2. We must determine its meaning from the contexts in which it appears.

C. The use of the term.

1. It is sometimes used to simply designate man.
 - a. Num. 23:19. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"
 - b. Job 35:8. "Your wickedness affects a man such as you, and your righteousness a son of man."
 - c. Jer. 49:18. "'As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors,' says the LORD, 'No one shall remain there, nor shall a son of man dwell in it.'"
2. It was used by God in speaking to Ezekiel. (Ezek. 2:1, 3, 6, 8)
 - a. Ezekiel 3:1. "Moreover He said to me, 'Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.'"
 - b. Ezekiel 37:3. "And He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' So I answered, 'O Lord GOD, You know.'"
3. It is used to designate the Messiah.
 - a. An uninspired Jewish book, "The Book of Enoch," uses it to designate a Messianic figure.
 - b. Daniel 7:13-14 connects it with the Messiah. "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."
4. It connected Jesus with humanity.
 - a. He had an earthly mother.
 - b. He took on the form of man. (Phil. 2:7)
 - c. He possessed human characteristics. (Heb. 2:14)
 - d. It seems hard for man to understand that He was both divine and human.

II. The Deity of Jesus

- A. He is designated as divine. (John 1:1-2)
- B. He was the "fullness of the Godhead." (Col. 2:9)
 1. If one saw Him, they saw the Father. (John 14:7-11)
 2. "He was and is, absolute and perfect God." (R.C. Trench, quoted by W.E. Vine in *The Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, p. 331)
 3. He was "Immanuel," "God with us." (Matt. 1:23)
- C. He could forgive sins that which only God had the authority to do. (Mark 2:5-7)
- D. Thomas called Him "God" and Jesus did not correct Him. (John 20:28)

- E. He existed “in the form of God.” (Phil. 2:6) In the Greek, the word translated “form,” is *morphe*.
1. It “means the essential attributes as shown in the form. In his preincarnate state Christ possessed the attributes of God and so appeared to those in heaven who saw him. Here is a clear statement by Paul of the deity of Christ.” (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the NT*, p.444)
 2. “*Morphe* is therefore properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract but as actually subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual itself exists.” (Gifford, quoted by Vine, 463)

III. The Humanity of Jesus

- A. Jesus “made Himself of no reputation” (ASV & NASV: “emptied himself”). (Phil. 2:7)
1. He gave up the environment of glory.
 2. “Christ did not empty Himself of Godhood. He did not cease to be what He essentially and eternally was.” (Vine, 365)
 3. He left the riches of heaven. (2 Cor. 8:9)
 - a. The footnote in the NASV on Philippians 2:7 states, “I.e., laid aside His privileges.”
 - b. He had no regard for self. His regard was only for others.
- B. He took upon Himself the “form of a bondservant” and the “likeness of men” in “appearance as a man.” (Phil. 2:7-8)
1. *Morphe*. “Denotes the special or characteristic form or feature of a person or thing; it is used with particular significance in the N.T., only of Christ, in Phil. 2:6-7, in the phrases ‘being in the form of God,’ and ‘taking the form of a servant.’” (Vine, 463)
 2. “The word became flesh.” (John 1:14; 2 John 7; 1 John 4:2)
 - a. He was born of the flesh. (Rom. 1:3)
 - b. He had a body prepared for Him. (Heb. 10:5)
 - c. He had a body of flesh and blood. (Heb. 2:14; Luke 24:39)
 - d. “God was manifested in the flesh.” (1 Tim. 3:16)
 3. How did humanity and deity come together? By the virgin birth. (Luke 1:26-35; Matt. 1:18; Gal. 4:4)
- C. Jesus had characteristics of humanity.
1. He was subject to certain laws of human development.
 - a. He grew. (Luke 2:40, 52)
 - b. He was subject to His parents. (Luke 2:51)
 2. He possessed human attributes.
 - a. Hunger. (Matt. 4:2)
 - b. Weariness. (John 4:5-6)
 - c. Sleep. (Luke 8:23)
 - d. Agony. (Luke 22:44)

- e. Compassion. (Matt. 9:36)
 - f. Sorrow and trouble. (Matt. 26:37-38)
 - g. Weeping. (John 11:35; Luke 19:41)
4. Though He was human, He was sinless. (John 8:46; 1 Pet. 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21)
- a. He was tempted. (Heb. 4:15)
 - b. What kept Him sinless?
 - 1) Not His deity. If so, what kind of example would He be to us? (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21-22)
 - 2) He resisted the devil. (Matt. 4:1-10; Jas. 4:7)
 - 3) He was made perfect through His suffering. (Heb. 2:9-10; 5:8-9)

Conclusion

1. One should love Jesus the man because:
 - a. He is deity yet He left the glories of heaven with all its beauty, peace and happiness in the presence of God and took the likeness of man to suffer, be hated and rejected, and put to death.
 - b. His dual nature enables Him to be the perfect Mediator between God and man. (1 Tim. 2:5)
 - c. He gave His life. (2 Cor. 5:21; John 10:17-18)
 - d. He will be a righteous judge. (Acts 17:31)
2. May all of us come to a better knowledge of the Son of Man so that we might have a deeper love for Him.

Jesus Christ: The Sacrifice for Sin

Text: 1 Peter 3:18

Introduction

1. Man is in need of a Savior.
 - a. Having committed sin, he is condemned as just punishment for it. (Rom. 3:10, 23; 6:23)
 - b. As a sinner, he cannot save himself. (Jer. 10:23; Prov.14:12)
2. Unless God acted to save man, all of mankind would perish.
 - a. Whatever salvation man has must come as a gift of God's grace (Eph. 2:8-9), not on the basis of merit—we have done nothing to deserve salvation.
 - b. God's love was great enough to send His Son to make lost man's salvation possible. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8)
3. Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice for man's sins.
4. 1 Peter 3:18. "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit."

I. "Christ...Suffered"

- A. His life was a life of suffering as it was prophesied it would be. (Isa. 53:3; Heb. 5:8)
- B. He suffered the reproach of the religious leaders of His day.
 1. They sought to kill Him on many occasions. (cf. Matt. 26:3-4; John 8:59; 10:29; 11:53)
 2. They conspired with Judas to have Him delivered to them. (Matt. 26:14-16)
 3. During five separate illegal trials He was spit upon, slapped, mocked, beaten, etc. (Matt. 26:65-67; 27:27-31)
- C. Finally, He was crucified.
 1. Crucifixion was one of the most painful ways of execution man has ever devised.
 2. "The suffering of death by crucifixion was intense, esp. in hot climates. Severe local inflammation, coupled with an insignificant bleeding of the jagged wounds, produced traumatic fever, which was aggravated by the exposure to the heat of the sun, the strained position of the body and insufferable thirst. The wounds swelled about the rough nails and the torn and lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood and a terrific throbbing headache ensued. The mind was confused and filled with anxiety and dread foreboding. The victim of crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths. Tetanus not rarely supervened and the rigors of the attending convulsions would tear at the wounds and add to the burden of pain, till at last the bodily forces were exhausted and the victim sank to

unconsciousness and death. The sufferings were so frightful that 'even among the raging passions of war pity was sometimes excited' (*BJ*, Vm xi, 1). The length of this agony was wholly determined by the constitution of the victim, but death rarely ensued before thirty-six hours had elapsed...Death was sometimes hastened by breaking the legs of the victims and by a hard blow delivered under the armpit before crucifixion...The sudden death of Christ evidently was a matter of astonishment (Mk 15:44)." (Henry E. Dosker, *I.S.B.E.*, Vol. II, pp. 761, 762)

II. "Christ...Suffered for Sins"

- A. His death was not merely the case of an innocent person suffering an injustice.
 - 1. He was an atonement for sin. (Rom. 5:11 - KJV. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.")
 - 2. He was the propitiation for sin—the means by which sin is covered and remitted. (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)
- B. That Jesus would suffer for sins was a matter of prophecy (Isa. 53:4-5, 10-12) which He fulfilled. (Rom. 3:24-25)

III. "Christ...Suffered for Sins Once"

- A. His sacrifice was a once for all-time event.
- B. This is seen in the contrast of His priesthood to the Levitical priesthood. (Heb. 7:26-27; 9:24-28; 10:23-27)

IV. "Christ...Suffered for Sins Once, the Righteous for the Unrighteous"

- A. See 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:18-19; and Hebrews 4:15.
- B. He knew no sin—He was never guilty of transgressing any of God's commands yet He suffered in order that ungodly sinners could be saved. (2 Cor. 5:21)

V. Salvation Is in Christ

- A. All spiritual blessings are in Christ. (Eph. 1:3) These include:
 - 1. Salvation. (2 Tim. 2:10)
 - 2. Redemption. (Rom. 3:24)
 - 3. Forgiveness. (Col. 1:14)
 - 4. Reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:19)
 - 5. An inheritance. (Eph. 1:11)
 - 6. Eternal life. (1 John 5:11)
- B. Salvation is only available through Him.
 - 1. He is the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6)
 - 2. Unless one believes in Him, he will die in his sins. (John 8:24)
 - 3. He has the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)
 - 4. There is salvation in no other. (Acts 4:12)

Conclusion

1. The gracious love of both Father and Son allowed Jesus to come to earth, live as a man, and suffer that sacrificial death upon the cross.
2. His death made your salvation possible.
3. Since He died to save you, you need to live for Him.

Letting Your Light Shine

Text: Matthew 5:14-16

Introduction

1. From the text we learn that the disciple of Christ is to let his light shine.
2. Such a command implies that His disciples are in the midst of darkness.
 - a. It is a spiritual darkness—the ignorance and sin of the world.
 - b. Because of this darkness, they are to be a source of light to those around them.
3. In this lesson, we will see:
 - a. How to let your light shine.
 - b. The difference between letting your light shine and shining your light.
 - c. Some ways to let your light shine.

I. How to Let Your Light Shine

- A. Jesus is the true “light of the world.” (John 8:12)
- B. Since Jesus is the true light, His disciples are to bear witness of and reflect His magnificent light.
 1. Christians, like the moon, shine by reflection.
 2. Christians shine by reflecting the majesty and glory of Jesus and the Father. (Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 2:21)

II. Letting Your Light Shine versus Shining Your Light

- A. There is a difference between letting your light shine and shining your light.
- B. The one who is “shining his light:”
 1. Parades his righteousness. (Luke 18:9-14)
 - a. The ostentatious display of this Pharisee is unacceptable before God.
 - b. One must be as the tax collector and humbly go about doing good.
 2. Is more interested in the praise of men than in God being glorified in him.
 - a. Jesus’ illustrations in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 6:1-2, 5, 16)
 - b. One’s righteousness is to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. (Matt. 5:20)
- C. The one who is “letting his light shine:”
 1. Goes about serving God in a quiet, unassuming manner.
 2. Goes about doing good without seeking notoriety and fanfare.
 3. Is satisfied for God to have the glory and none for himself.

III. Some Ways to Let Your Shine

- A. Live a righteous life. (Titus 2:11-14)
 1. Live unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27)
 2. Do not be conformed to the world. (Rom. 12:1-2)

3. Be separate from the world. (2 Cor. 6:17-18)
 4. The Christian must live each day before the people of the world.
 - a. Quite possibly the only knowledge of the way of Christ they will ever have is what they see in you.
 - b. People watch you to see if you act in accordance with your profession to believe in and follow Christ.
- B. Do good works. The Christian is:
1. Created in Jesus for them. (Eph. 2:10)
 2. To be zealous for them. (Titus 2:14)
 3. To do good unto all men. (Gal. 6:10)
 - a. One must be honest and upright in all his dealings.
 - b. One must be mindful of the needs of others.
 4. Produce the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23)
- C. Have a forgiving spirit. (Eph. 4:32)
1. To properly reflect Christ, one must have His forgiving spirit. (Luke 23:34)
 2. To follow the example of the Christ-like spirit of Stephen. (Acts 7:60)
 3. One's own forgiveness is contingent upon forgiving others. (Matt. 6:14-15)
- D. Have love for brethren. (John 13:35)
- E. Be optimistic and enthusiastic about your life and service for the Lord.
1. Optimism is:
 - a. The result of a favorable outlook.
 - b. Akin to faith while pessimism is akin to doubt.
 - 1) The pessimist is full of gloom.
 - 2) It is said of the pessimist that, "He feels bad when he feels good for fear he will feel worse when he feels better."
 2. While life and its problems must be faced in a practical way, one's outlook, whether optimism or pessimism, will determine whether he deals with his problems with either strength or weakness.
 3. The Christian can deal with life's problems from a position of strength and optimism because he has the aid of Christ. (Phil. 4:13)
- F. Have an idealistic approach to life.
1. Viewing life's stresses not as stumbling blocks but as stepping stones that lead to higher ground enables one to face life's realities head-on.
 2. One who has this attitude sets an example before others showing how Christ and His word enables one to overcome life's problems.

Conclusion

1. The Christian must reflect the Christ and His glory to those around him.
2. If you are not letting your light shine, you are in darkness.
3. If you are in darkness, you are in sin.
4. If you are in sin, you can come to Jesus and submit to what He would have you to do to have your sins forgiven.

The Worthy Man

Text: Job 31:1-40

Introduction

1. Most Christians are familiar with the “worthy woman” of Proverbs 31.
 - a. She is described as one who is praised by her family and by God.
 - b. She is held forth as an example for women today to emulate.
2. There has been little taught about a “worthy man,” one who could be presented as an example to male Christians today.
3. One who could fit that category is Job.
 - a. He is described as one who was “blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.” (Job 1:1)
 - b. In spite of all the adversity he had to endure, he remained faithful to God.
4. In Job 31, Job describes himself and his attitudes about life.
 - a. He was defending himself against the false charges of sinfulness his three friends had leveled against him.
 - b. In his description, we find attitudes that are helpful to men who would live godly and righteously today.

I. He Is Morally Pure (vv. 1-4)

- A. He knows he is to think on pure things. (Phil. 4:8)
- B. He applies the wisdom from above which is pure. (Jas. 3:17)
- C. He keeps himself pure. (1 Tim. 5:22)
- D. He realizes that to the pure all things are pure. (Titus 1:15)
- E. As a Christian, he has hope in God so he purifies himself just as He is pure. (1 John 3:3)

II. He Is Characterized by Justice in All Things (vv. 5-8)

- A. Consider the examples of:
 1. Noah. (Gen. 6:9)
 2. Abraham. (Gen. 18:19)
 3. Joseph. (Matt. 1:19)
- B. The Lord requires one to do justly. (Mic. 6:8)
- C. The just one lives by faith. (Rom. 1:17)

III. He Considers Marriage Sacred - He Is a Good Husband (vv. 9-12)

- A. He adheres to the principle of Hebrews 13:4.
- B. Husbands are to love their wives. (Eph. 5:25, 28-29, 33)

- C. Husbands are to dwell with their wives with understanding. (1 Pet. 3:7)
- D. The husband is to submit to his wife and always consider her needs. (1 Cor. 7:3-4)

IV. He Is Kind (vv. 13-23)

- A. He is characterized by love. (1 Cor. 13:4)
- B. He heeds the command to be kind to all. (Eph. 4:32)

V. He Is Not a False Worshiper (vv. 24-28)

- A. He does not worship money. (1 Tim. 3:3; 6:10; Heb. 13:5)
- B. He does not fall prey to the false “idols” of sun, moon, stars (nature, astrology, etc.).

VI. He Is Loving (vv. 29-30)

- A. He embodies the principles of love in 1 Corinthians 13.
- B. He even loves his enemies. (Matt. 5:43-48)

VII. He Is Hospitable (vv. 31-32)

- A. He practices the hospitality enjoined in 1 Peter 4:9.
- B. Hospitality is a characteristic of all godly men, such as Abraham. (Heb. 13:2)

VIII. He Is Sincere in All His Ways (vv. 33-37)

- A. He is not double-minded and thus unstable. (Jas. 1:6-8)
- B. The pure in heart will see God. (Matt. 5:8)
- C. He realizes the heart demonstrates what one really is. (Prov. 23:7; 27:19)

IX. He Is Respectful of His Blessings - A Good Steward (vv. 38-40)

- A. Unlike the Gentiles, he does not fail to thank God for them. (Rom. 1:21)
- B. He acknowledges that all that he has that is good comes from God. (Jas. 1:17)

Conclusion

1. Job was recognized, praised and blessed by God because of the kind of man he was.
2. All men can learn from him and his life if they would be worthy of praise from both God and their family.

The Wickedness of Jehoiakim

Text: Jeremiah 36:1-32

Introduction

1. Old Testament events have been recorded and preserved for our learning. (Rom. 15:4)
2. An incident found in the book of Jeremiah involving the wicked king Jehoiakim teaches us a vitally important lesson that we must take to heart.

I. King Jehoiakim

- A. Born Eliakim (“God is setting up”), the son of good king Josiah (641-609 B.C.), he reigned for eleven years from 609-598 B.C.
 1. At age 25 he succeeded his brother Jehoahaz to the throne.
 - a. Jehoahaz, who had succeeded his father, reigned for only three months for he was deposed by Pharaoh Necho of Egypt.
 - b. He was imprisoned at Riblah in the land of Hamath then taken by Pharaoh to Egypt where he died. (2 Kings 23:31-34)
 2. He was appointed king by Pharaoh Necho. (2 Chron. 36:4)
 - a. Necho changed his name to “Jehoiakim” (“the Lord raises up”) in order to demonstrate his authority over him.
 - b. During his reign, Necho exacted heavy tribute from Judah (2 Chron. 36:3, 5) [100 talents of silver = \$2,184,000 and 1 talent of gold = \$1,092,000] for which Jehoiakim levied a burdensome tax upon the people.
- B. He was an arrogant and wicked king.
 1. He exploited the people to build his own house with expensive furnishings. (Jer. 22:13-17)
 2. Unlike his father Josiah, he ignored justice and righteousness.
 3. He had no intention of obeying the Lord but rather he “did evil in the sight of the Lord.” (2 Kings 23:36-37)
 - a. His 11 year reign was filled with abominable acts against God and against the people. (2 Chron. 36:8)
 - b. Because of his evil, Jeremiah prophesied that no one would lament his death. (Jer. 22:18-19)
- C. His wicked acts included:
 1. The execution of Urijah, a prophet of God. (Jer. 26:20-23)
 2. The cutting and burning of a scroll of Jeremiah’s prophecies, judgments against Judah and Jehoiakim. (Jer. 36:22-23)

- D. Though he could burn the word of God, he could not destroy its power.
 - 1. He could not avoid Jeremiah's prophecy of approaching destruction but he tried.
 - a. Recognizing the power of Babylon, he made an agreement with King Nebuchadnezzar to serve as his vassal king. (2 Kings 24:1)
 - b. After three years he led a foolish rebellion to regain his nation's independence. The rebellion failed.
 - 2. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians and Jehoiakim was bound and carried away as a captive. (2 Chron. 36:6)

II. Cutting and Burning the Word of God (Jeremiah 36:1-32)

- A. God instructed Jeremiah to compile all the prophecies He had made against Judah since the days of Josiah on a scroll and read it to the people in order to get them to repent. (vv. 1-3)
- B. At the instructions of Jeremiah, Baruch, his scribe, wrote the prophecies on a scroll and went and read them to the people at the Temple. (vv. 4-10)
- C. Michaiah, hearing Baruch, informed all the princes of Judah. (vv. 11-13)
- D. The princes sent Jehudi and fetched Baruch who read the scroll to them. (vv. 14-15)
 - 1. They determined to tell Jehoiakim what they had heard. (v. 16)
 - 2. Having learned that Baruch had received his instructions from Jeremiah, they kept the scroll but instructed him and Jeremiah to hide. (vv. 17-19)
- E. The princes hid the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe and then told the king all it said. (v. 20)
- F. Jehoiakim sent Jehudi to fetch the scroll and had him read it to him. (v. 21)
- G. Jehoiakim took a scribe's knife and cut the scroll in pieces and burnt its pieces. (vv. 22-23)
 - 1. Neither he nor his servants showed any sign of remorse at this act even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah implored him not to do it. (vv. 24-25)
 - 2. He commanded that Baruch and Jeremiah be seized but the Lord had hidden them. (v. 26)
- H. God instructed Jeremiah to make another scroll like the one Jehoiakim destroyed and to inform him of his doom at the hands of the Babylonians, judgment from God because of his wickedness and the wickedness of Judah. (vv. 27-31)
- J. Jeremiah followed the instructions of God even adding more to the scroll than before. (v. 32)

III. Applications Today

- A. One cannot destroy God's word by destroying the paper upon which it is written.
 - 1. God's words will not pass away. (Matt. 24:35)
 - 2. The word of the Lord abides forever. (1 Pet. 1:24-25)
 - 3. The words of Jesus will judge in the last day. (John 12:47-48)
- B. Becoming angry does not alter God's word. (2 Kings 5:10-14; Jas. 1:19-20)
- C. Refusing to accept it does not alter God's word. (Matt. 11:7-14)

Conclusion

1. Revelation 22:18-19. One is not to add to nor take away from the words of God.
2. James 2:10. "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."
3. Accept God's word for what it is and what it says. Do not try to alter it or ignore it. Receive it with meekness to the salvation of your soul.



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