

Messengers For Christ

*Outreach Program
Handbook 5*

Colossians 3:17:

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

From my earliest days I remember my excitement to learn about the new birth and all that I have in Christ. I was thrilled to learn about all God had done for me in Christ Jesus. One of my best sources of spiritual nourishment was my favorite blue book. Chapter three of *The Bible Tells Me So*, “*Are You Limiting God?*” posed a question which both challenged me and thrilled me at the same time. It started with and revolved around the name of Jesus Christ. Those original words still echo in my heart.

“Jesus Christ is the sweetest name I know, for it is in His name, and His name alone, that I see the unlimited possibilities in man. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that men and women are saved, born again, converted. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that the sick are healed to rise up again and declare the glory of the Lord. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that devil spirits are cast out and people are forever freed in body and mind. Unless we know that name of Jesus Christ as a vital living reality in our lives, we are most definitely limiting God.”

The Bible records that the first century believers knew the power. . . the potential. . . the vital living reality of the name of Jesus Christ. The New Testament says that people who heard the gospel and responded positively, called upon Jesus’ name for salvation (Acts 2:21), put their faith in Jesus’ name (John 1:12; I John 5:13), were then justified (I Corinthians 6:11) and forgiven in Jesus’ name (Acts 10:43; I John 2:12), and were then baptized into Jesus’ name (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:5). Having then, life in his name (John 20:31), believers are to glorify the name of Jesus (II Thessalonians 1:12) and give thanks for and do everything in the name of Jesus (Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:17).

I did a quick survey of the New Testament and found it recorded God’s people to have: anointed with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14); arose and walked in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Acts 3:6); asked in his name (John 14:13,14; John 15:16); baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5); bore his name before people (Acts 9:15); believed on his name (John 1:12; 2:23; I John 3:23; 5:13); beseeched the brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 1:10); bowed at the name of Jesus (Philippians 2:10); called on the name (Acts 9:14,21); called on the name of the Lord to be saved (Acts 2:21; I Corinthians 1:2); came in the name of the Lord (Matthew 23:39; Mark 11:10); cast out devils in the name (Matthew 7:22; Mark 9:38; 16:17; Acts 16:18); commanded the brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 3:6); declared the name unto the brethren (Hebrews 2:12); did a miracle in his name (Mark 9:39); did many wonderful works in his name (Matthew 7:22); did signs and wonders by the name of the holy child Jesus (Acts 4:30); did whatsoever in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17); found the devils subject to them through the name (Luke 10:17); gathered together in his name (Matthew 18:20); gave thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20); had faith in his name (Acts 3:16); had life through his name (John 20:31); hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:26); held fast the name (Revelation 2:13); let the fruit of their lips give thanks to his name (Hebrews 13:15); let the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in them (II Thessalonians 1:12); magnified the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:17); preached boldly in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:27,29); preached repentance and remission of sins in his name (Luke 24:47); prophesied in thy name (Matthew 7:22); received the gift of the Holy Ghost in his name (Acts 2:38); repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); sang unto his name (Romans 15:9); showed how to work and labor in love toward his name (Hebrews 6:10); spoke in the name (Acts 4:17,18); stood whole by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Acts 4:10); suffered for his name (Acts 9:16); suffered shame for his name (Acts 5:41); taught in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:17); trusted in his name (Matthew 12:21); were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 6:11); were ready to be bound and die for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 21:13); were reproached for the name of Christ (I Peter 4:14); were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 6:11); were saved in the name (Acts 4:12); and were washed in the name of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 6:11). As if that wasn’t enough, we are told in Colossians 3:17 that whatsoever we do in word or deed, we are to do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

The first century church knew the power of the name of Jesus Christ and used it consistently. The Biblical records still thrill and challenge me these many years later as I consider if I am limiting God. I want to know that name of Jesus Christ as a vital living reality in my life so I don’t limit God. I trust our study of the names and titles of Jesus will make him even more precious to you.

Affirmations: I will not limit God in my life. I am learning the vital living reality of the name of Jesus Christ in my life.

Conversation Starters: Are you limiting God in your life? How do you use the name of Jesus Christ?

Recommended Reading: Colossians 3; Psalms 78 (Note especially verse 41.)

Luke 1:31-33:

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. ³² He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: ³³ And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

A “name” is a word or phrase that distinguishes and identifies; it is that by which something is marked and known. However, the question Jesus asked his disciples in Matthew 16:15, “Who do you say I am?” shows that a name is more than just an identifying label. It signifies not only the person but also expresses an estimation of what the person stands for or functions as. It has similar qualities of a reputation associating the individual with merit, achievement, reliability and the like. The answer we give to the same question, “Who do you say Jesus is?” is very important as we consider the value or worth of our privilege to use his name in our lives.

In ancient Israel, most people had only one name, what we think of as a “first name” or “given name.” They did not have a “last name,” “family name” or “surname.” Our lord and savior is only identified by two names: Jesus and Emmanuel, both of which have attributes that deal with salvation.

In the New Testament, the name “Jesus” is given in Luke 1:31 where an angel tells Mary to name her child Jesus and in Matthew 1:21 where an angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus. “Emmanuel” occurs only in Matthew 1:23 which is said to be a quote from Isaiah 7:14.

He was known primarily as “Jesus” in the New Testament. Actually, his name in Hebrew was probably *Yehoshua* which was shortened to *Yeshua* (equivalent to “Joshua”), which in the NT is translated by the Greek *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iesous*), from which we get the Latin *Iesus* and the English “Jesus.” Moreover, just as most Biblical names have specific meanings, so does “Joshua/Jesus.” It simply means “God saves.” (In Hebrews 4:8 “Jesus” should have been translated “Joshua” like the ASV, NAS, NIV and other more recent translations have done.)

To distinguish similarly named people from one another, individuals were further identified either by their geographical origin (“Jesus of Nazareth,” “Joseph of Arimathea,” “Judas Iscariot” or “Mary Magdalene”) or their occupation or politics (“the carpenter,” “Simon the tanner” or “Simon Zelotes”). They were also often associated with relatives: usually their fathers (“Simon Barjona,” “Jesus, the son of Joseph,” or “David son of Jesse”), sometimes their siblings (“the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon”) or more rarely their mothers (“Jesus, son of Mary”).

In contrast, “titles” are significantly different from names. Just as “important people” often have titles today (President, Senator, Judge, Doctor, Professor, etc.), so also in the ancient world, certain people were given titles to designate specific roles, functions or responsibilities. Although more than one title can be attributed to the same person, each title usually has a particular origin and a specific meaning. Thus, even though all of the following titles are attributed to the same person, *Jesus of Nazareth*, it is important to know that they all have *significantly different origins* and *very different meanings*. They are for us to treasure and ponder in our hearts as we learn more about the nature of him whom we love and serve.

Luke 2:8-19:

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them [the shepherds], and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰ **And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.** ¹¹ **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.** ¹² **And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.** ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.** ¹⁵ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. ¹⁶ And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. [That was noted in verses 10-12 and 14.] ¹⁸ And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. [They wondered how this baby could be their savior, their Christ and their lord. Read boldface verses again.] ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

Mary spent a lifetime pondering these things. You and I would do good to follow her example. During our time together we are going to take a good look at Jesus, and as we consider him we will see our appreciation increase and with that our endurance also.

Affirmations: I have a growing appreciation of my Lord Jesus Christ. I think about Jesus’ impact on my life.

Conversation Starters: Who do you say Jesus is? What does the name “Jesus” mean to you?

Recommended Reading: Luke 1 & 2

Matthew 6:9:

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

The eastern culture of the Bible placed an extraordinary value on having a good name. Proverbs 22:1 says that “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. . . .” Ecclesiastes 7:1 says, “A good name is better than precious ointment. . . .” We should cherish a good name because it indicates virtue and integrity. It should be nurtured and respected as a most precious possession.

In the East, a man’s name was even far more significant than it is for us today. A good name was your certificate to many benefits and good things, provided you bore it with integrity. This is why it is so very significant, especially in the East, when God says that He has “magnified His Word above all His name.” God guarantees and certifies His Word on His very good name. This indeed means His Word has integrity, for God and all He does has integrity. God’s name is exalted above all other names and is therefore exalted in scripture. God’s name is a declaration of His greatness.

Psalms 8:1:

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Psalms 103:1:

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Psalms 113:1-3:

Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD’S name is to be praised.

Psalms 148:13:

Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

Because God’s name is excellent, we are to recognize it and exalt it in our prayer and in our praise. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9). He also taught them to pray to the Father in his name for doing so is legally binding. Jesus Christ has accomplished things on our behalf, which legally allows God to bless and protect us. His tremendous actions of love and all that he endured for our salvation has won the victory for us. The name of Jesus Christ has the greatest power and weight with God possible, and God wants us to use it.

Isn’t that wonderful? God has given those of us who have made Christ our Lord the privilege of using his name! What a loving God! When we are saved, we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Now we live with him as our Lord. We immerse ourselves in everything that name of Jesus Christ represents, in everything that name is and has before God. We thus make him our Lord, allowing God to make us like him spiritually. He thereby saves us as we believe in Christ and that He has raised him from the dead.

This is what we are doing when we “confess” Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We are saying that we are making ourselves subject to Christ, to everything he has done, to everything he believes, to everything he stands for and everything he is. God then performs the miracle of all miracles within us, and we can then receive all the benefits He has for us. These benefits are nothing short of phenomenal as we enjoy “the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe” (Ephesians 1:19). It is important to grow in our understanding of this. We make Jesus our Lord, and everything he is and has becomes ours. He is now the standard by which we live and enjoy the benefits of God in our lives.

One’s name was important in the East, for it represented everything about the person bearing the name. Hopefully this helps us understand what we are doing when we use the name of Jesus Christ in prayer to God and when we get baptized in his name. It is the use of his name and all it represents to **legally** bring to pass the thing entreated in prayer through the great power of God Himself, the power which is in the name of Jesus Christ, the very power of the Word of Almighty God! That’s big! It takes a while to fully assimilate it.

Affirmations: I have a good name. Jesus is my Lord and I obey. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

Conversation Starters: How important is a good name to you? Do you know about the power in Jesus’ name?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 6; Psalms 103

II Thessalonians 1:12:

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are three things we need to understand regarding the name of Jesus. The scriptures say Jesus Christ **inherited** a name. They also say he **made** himself a name. Finally, they say God **gave or bestowed upon him** a name. This will help us understand what we inherit, what is made unto us, and what we are given in the new birth when we were created in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 1:1-5:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; ³ Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; ⁴ Being made so much better than the angels, **as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.** ⁵ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Jesus Christ inherited his name because there were credentials he needed to achieve salvation for us. Not just anyone could have been our Savior. Our Savior needed certain qualifications and credentials which legally gave him the protocol and the legal right to accomplish our salvation for us. He had to be of the tribe of Judah, a son of David and God's only begotten son (Revelation 5:5). The first prophecy of him referred to him as the seed of the woman.

Secondly, Jesus Christ had to **make** himself a name. He had to fulfill all the Mosaic law and all the prophecies concerning himself. He had to live a sinless life and give himself as the perfect sacrifice. In other words, he had to **live up** to his name. If he had not fulfilled these things, then not only legally could he not be our Savior, but our salvation would not stand on legal grounds before God.

Philippians 2:5-8:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: [That's what he thought—now look at what he did!] ⁷ But **made himself** of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Thirdly, when our salvation was accomplished, God **gave** him a name — a name above every name, as a bona fide legal consequence and reward for what he accomplished. If God had not given him what He did, then there would be no point to him inheriting and making himself a name! God His Father has **certified** Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and that all those who make him their Lord are saved. His certification is in the seal with which He seals us, His holy spirit of promise. Jesus Christ received the full fruit of his actions and with the legal sanction and blessing of Almighty God, the Righteous Judge, our salvation and redemption were completed when God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Because of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, God is now **legally** able to give all of mankind what He had been yearning to give them from before the foundation of the world — the great liberty of sonship by birth and incorruptible seed, everlasting life! These three categories regarding Christ's name form the **legal ground** of our salvation.

Philippians 2:8-11:

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Three is the number of completeness, and these three aspects of his name show the complete preeminence of the wonderful name of Jesus Christ. He inherited a name. He made himself a name, and God gave him a name above every name. At the name of Jesus every knee bows.

Affirmations: I glorify the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I graciously use Jesus' name.

Conversation Starters: Do you know how Jesus inherited his name? Do you know what is the greatest name in the universe?

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 1; Philippians 2

Luke 2:49:

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

In our last session we looked at three aspects of the name of Jesus. We saw from Hebrews 1:4 that Jesus inherited a name. We also saw from Philippians 2:6-11 that Jesus made a name for himself by his walk with his Father and because of that God gave him a name above every name — a name at which every knee should bow.

Jesus made a name for himself by his selfless service, and if we ever want to learn how to live in the awesome reality of that name, we, too, will need to follow his excellent example of serving God and His people. Philippians 2:6-11 focuses on the example of Jesus Christ — the greatest bondservant of all time, our *prime example of humility and obedience*.

Philippians 2:6-8:

Who [Jesus Christ], being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself; and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:6-8 expresses in three phrases *what Jesus Christ did* (the name he made for himself), and verses 9-11 express in three phrases *what God did for Jesus* as a result (the name God gave him as a result). Verses 6-8 state that Jesus Christ (1) did not consider equality with God as something to be used for his own advantage [Philippians 2:6 CSB, the Holman Christian Standard Bible], (2) made himself of no reputation and (3) humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death. These three clauses in verses 6-8 correspond with three other clauses in verses 9-11.

Philippians 2:9-11:

Wherefore (1) God also hath highly exalted him, and (2) given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee [figure of speech *synecdoche*, part put for the whole person] should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth [underground, i.e. those who have been buried and returned to dust, like Acts 2:29]; ¹¹ And *that* (3) every tongue [*synecdoche*, part put for the whole person] should confess [admit] that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

They are introduced by the word “wherefore,” *dio*, which sets that which precedes in correspondence with that which follows after it. In verses 9-11 God expresses in three clauses what He did for Jesus Christ because of Christ's humble attitude and manner of life. First, God highly exalted him. Secondly, God gave him a reputation, a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee must bow in three realms: heaven, earth and under the earth. Finally, the third clause “and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father” is contrasted with Christ's considering equality a thing not to be used to make others subservient to himself.

The repetition of “name” three times in verses 9 and 10 is emphatic. It's the figure *repetitio* or repetition, the repetition of words irregularly in a passage. Of course it draws our attention to what is being said about the name — it's an exalted name, and the reason it is exalted is at the center of the interpretation of the passage.

Let's not forget verse 5, which immediately precedes what we just read. It says, “Let this mind [those thoughts] be in you which was [were] also in Christ Jesus.” Jesus did not use his position as the Son of God for his own purposeful gain. He made himself of no reputation. He humbled himself becoming obedient unto death. But God highly exalted him, gave him a reputation and made him lord over all. May we work with this same attitude of humility and service as “sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye [we] shine as lights in the world” (verse 15).

Verses 6-11 are the real diamonds in chapter two. The obedient example of Jesus Christ and God's response to it should be treasured by every believing saint as we do our best to live the mystery of the One Body of Christ to which we have been called. Like Jesus, we do not need to call attention to ourselves or promote ourselves. We are not after personal glory — “vainglory” as it says in verse 3. What we are after is to bring glory to God our Father. That's what Jesus Christ accomplished, and that's what we can accomplish, too, as we walk in his steps using his name.

Affirmations: Like Jesus I'm about my Father's business. I follow Jesus' example of humility and obedience.

Conversation Starters: What do you know about Jesus' name? Have you ever thought about life as a servant?

Recommended Reading: II Thessalonians 2

Zephaniah 3:9:

For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

As noted before, there are remarkable correspondences between the concepts and words used in verses six through eleven and its surrounding context. The accurate message of verses six through eleven can be organized in light of the following introverted structure.

A. Christ did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage [CSB].

B. He made himself of no reputation in three ways:

1. Receiving the form of the slave,
2. Existing in the likeness of men,
3. Being found in fashion as a man.

C. He humbled himself unto death, death by crucifixion.

C'. God highly exalted him. **(God's reward of exaltation for Christ's humility)**

B'. God gave him a name which is above every name, that at his name every knee must bow in three realms:

(God's reward for Christ's making himself of no reputation was to give him a name above every name.)

1. Heaven,
2. Earth,
3. Under the earth.

A'. Every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ is lord to the glory of God the Father. Jesus Christ became our lord as God is Lord over all. **(God's reward of lordship for Christ's rejection of the prideful possibility of usurpation.)**

Let's not forget verse 5 which immediately precedes what we just read. It says, "Let this mind [those thoughts] be in you which was [were] also in Christ Jesus." Jesus did not use his position as the Son of God for his own purposeful gain. He made himself of no reputation. He humbled himself becoming obedient unto death. But God highly exalted him, gave him a reputation and made him lord over all. May we work with this same attitude of humility and service as "sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (verse 15).

Again, in Philippians 2, verses 6-11 are the real diamonds. The obedient example of Jesus Christ and God's response to it should be treasured by every believing saint as we do our best to live the mystery of the One Body of Christ to which we have been called. Like Jesus, we do not need to call attention to ourselves or promote ourselves. We are not after personal glory — "vainglory" as it says in verse 3. What we are after is to bring glory to God our Father. That's what Jesus Christ accomplished, and that's what we can accomplish, too, as we walk in his steps using his name. Every person place and thing has a name. Every sickness and disease has a name. Every fear has a name. But the name of Jesus is above them all. Jesus is honored having been given a name of dignity above all creatures, men and angels. Such is its power that the whole creation must be in subjection to it. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess his lordship to the glory of God our Father.

In Acts 25:11 Paul appealed unto Caesar. The word "appeal" (*epikaloumai*) is the same word translated "call" (or "calling") in Acts 2:21, 22:16, and Romans 10:13. Paul, in appealing to Caesar, was claiming the right of a Roman citizen to have his case judged by Caesar. He was asking that his case be transferred to Caesar's court and that Caesar hear and pass judgment on his case. In so doing, he indicated that he was resting his case on Caesar's judgment. In order for this to be done Paul had to submit to whatever was necessary in order for his case to be brought before Caesar. He had to submit to the Roman soldiers who conveyed him to Rome. He had to submit to whatever formalities or procedure Caesar demanded of those who came before him. All of this was involved in his appeal to Caesar.

Paul's "appeal" or "calling" to Caesar involved his submission to him. Similarly our calling upon God is not a mere verbal recognition of God or just a verbal petition to Him. It involves obedience. Those whom Saul sought to bind in Damascus were described as people who call on this name (Acts 9:21). These were people who not only verbally called out to God but also responded by obediently submitting themselves to His authority and serving him. Zephaniah 3:9 associates one's "calling" with one's "service." Only when a person submits to the will of God can he accurately be described as "calling on the Lord."

After Peter quoted the prophecy of Joel and told those in Jerusalem on Pentecost that "whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21), he told them how to go about "calling on the name of the Lord." The people who heard him understood that it required them to do something. They responded, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter answered their question saying, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Their humble and obedient response allowed them to receive, *lambanō*, the promised gift of holy spirit.

Affirmations: I think like Jesus thought. I am humble and obedient.

Conversation Starters: What name frightens you? Do you reverence any name?

Recommended Reading: Acts 9 & 25

Psalms 20:5:

We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

Calling on someone's name was part of the Biblical culture. This custom of calling on someone's name in the Old Testament may be foreign to the western mind, but it was well understood by the eastern peoples of Bible times. If a man accidentally killed someone he had two options to avoid the avenger of blood. First, he could flee to one of the six cities of refuge. The regulations concerning these cities of refuge are found in Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 19:1-13; and Joshua 20. Briefly, everything was to be done to facilitate the flight of the manslayer, lest the avenger of blood, i.e. the nearest of kin to the slain person, should pursue him with hot heart, and, overtaking him, should smite him mortally.

Upon reaching the city of refuge he was to be received by the elders and his case heard. If this was satisfactory, they gave him asylum until a regular trial could be carried out. They would take him back to the city or district from which he had fled, and there, among those who knew him, witnesses were examined. If it were proved that he was not a willful slayer, that he had no grudge against the person killed and had shown no sign of purpose to injure him, then he was declared innocent and conducted back to the city in which he had taken refuge where he must stay until the death of the high priest. After the death of the high priest he was free to return home in safety.

Until the death of the high priest he must on no account go beyond the city boundaries. If he did, the avenger of blood might slay him without blame. On the other hand, if he were found guilty of deliberate murder, there was no more protection for him. He was handed over to the avenger of blood who, with his own hand, took the murderer's life.

If he were caught by the avenger of blood before reaching the city of refuge he had one more option. He may put up his hands and call on the name of someone highly respected and loved and ask pardon in his name. The avenger of blood may completely pardon and say, "All right, you are free now, I have fulfilled my purpose of avenging blood. Because you have called on so-and-so's name, you are free now."

Should the avenger of blood choose not to pardon him and kill him anyway, then the slain man's family may go to the man upon whose name he had called and tell him. He then may take revenge upon the slayer because he did not respect his name. However, if the man was pardoned because he called on the name of someone the avenger of blood acknowledged and respected, both would return home in peace, and the matter would be ended with one exception: When the pardoned man went home, he would not keep quiet about what just happened. He would tell his family what happened and they would take gifts to the benefactor, but it would seldom stop there. They, wanting to honor him and show their appreciation, would put garlands around his neck and set up a canopy. This canopy would be about six yards long and two yards wide, made with white cloth held by sticks — two in front and two in back. Two people would hold the corners at the front and two at the back. The honored man whose name saved him would walk under it, and he would be paraded around. The man who was saved by his name would walk in front of him and the rest of the people would walk on the sides. They would beat the drums, sing and shout to tell everyone that salvation came because of this man's name.

This oriental custom is obscured in Psalms 20:5.

Psalms 20:5:

We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

The word "banners" here should be "canopies." The application for us seems obvious. We, too, are to rejoice in our salvation. We were without God and without hope in the world until we called on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is above every name. Everything bows to that name; it is the only name under heaven by which we must be saved. As Hebrews 7:25 says, Jesus is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Are we figuratively setting up our canopy and telling people about it? Do we rejoice in our salvation or are we ashamed of who has saved us from sin, sickness and death? Shouldn't we do as the blind man of John 9 did who said: "I was blind, but now I see." How can anyone argue with our first-hand accounts of deliverance. "To set up a canopy for someone" is an idiom which means that we not only honor the person, we also witness to the greatness of that person. The more we witness the Lord Jesus Christ, the more joy we experience.

We are saved by calling on the name of Jesus Christ. After salvation we must "set up a canopy" for him — proclaim our salvation. We testify to it so others may also partake of our joy and honor he whose name wrought our deliverance. We either declare it or deny it. The choice is ours.

Affirmations: Jesus is my kinsman redeemer. I magnify the name of the lord.

Conversation Starters: Do you know about the avenger of blood? Have you ever called on the name of the lord?

Recommended Reading: Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 19:1-13; or Joshua 20

Romans 10:13:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Isaiah 12 is another elaboration on this oriental custom of calling on someone's name.

Isaiah 12:2-6:

Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation. ³ Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. ⁴ And in that day [when we raise our canopy] shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. ⁵ Sing unto the LORD [This is done by the friends of the pardoned manslayer who accompany him.]; for he hath done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth. ⁶ Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great *is* the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

There are as many explanations of "calling on the name of the Lord" as there are explainers. However this background shows us how in many contexts it simply refers to asking for help, deliverance and salvation accompanied by a promise or pledge of obedience. God declares His faithfulness to respond when He is called in several places in the Old Testament. Here are three:

Psalms 50:15: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Psalms 91:15:

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Jeremiah 33:3: Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Some workmen have proposed that "to call on the name of the Lord" means: 1. To worship the lord; 2. To pray to the Lord (counter example Jeremiah 29:12); 3. To petition the Lord; and 4. To repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord. The best one I found is "to call on the name of the Lord" means literally "to call on the Lord by name."

One of the most important things for us to remember is that it is always available for us to call upon the name of the Lord whenever we need help, deliverance or salvation. We must also realize that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the authority to use his name to bring deliverance to God's people today.

Ephesians 1:17-23:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: ¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, ²⁰ Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²² And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The Church has the power of attorney, the right to use the name of Jesus Christ. I have shown you the Scriptural passages teaching of the name of Jesus Christ which show the power that is behind that name. We must ask ourselves honestly, "Do we have the power of attorney?" Do we have the right, the God-given authority to use the name of Jesus Christ and see things come to pass?

For years and years people inside the fellowship of believers have seen some positive results. We should want to see more and see more consistently. We must realize that just to say the name of Jesus Christ is not all that is necessary; we must believe that when we speak it things will come to pass. The name is not a magic word like "alakazam" or "open sesame." The power comes from knowing the man who carried the name and identifying with him. It comes by walking in his steps and doing what he did. This power is energized by believing what the Word of God says and then acting upon it. As we hear the Word and act upon it, God will answer our requests.

John 14:12-15:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. ¹³ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

We should use what we've been given! What value is it to us to have money in the bank if we do not know we have it? Now that we know what's available, let's walk into its magnificence. In the name of Jesus Christ activate that power and live the more abundant life.

Affirmations: I call upon the name of the lord. I use the name of Jesus Christ and identify with him.

Conversation Starters: Have you ever used the name of Jesus Christ? Do you know who has power of attorney to use his name?

Recommended Reading: Ephesians 1; Isaiah 12

I Samuel 17:45:

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

We saw in the letter to the Philippians that the name of Jesus, which is bestowed upon him by God, is the name above every other name — the name at which every knee will bow. This name is a very sacred and holy thing which should instill in us a sense of the power, the virtue and the glory associated with its proper use.

The word “name” and its inflected forms occur nearly 1,100 times in the KJV, almost always translating the Hebrew *shem* (also rendered “fame,” “renoun,” and “report”) or the Greek *onoma*. Just under half of these occurrences refer to the name of God or God’s son. In the New Testament, the Greek word *onoma*, name, is used 230 times with at least four usages. It is used of:

1. Proper names that identify people, places or things – Matthew 1:21, 23; 10:2; Act 27:1; Luke 1:26; Mark 14:32; John 10:3.
2. What a name stands for (i.e. person), often in plural, designating indefinite numbers of *persons* or *people* who make up a group – Acts 1:15; 18:15; Revelation 3:4; 11:13 (*onoma*, occurs before “of men”).
3. Expressing authority or cause indicating rank or authority attributed to a representative (*in the*) *name* (*of*); especially of authorization to represent God or Christ in praying, speaking, working miracles, etc. – I Corinthians 1:10; Acts 4:7, 30
4. Reputation, (both good: Mark 6:14 and bad: Luke 6:22) everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is aroused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering the name, such as one’s rank, authority, interests, pleasure, command, excellences, deeds etc. – Revelation 3:1

Biblically, doing something in someone else’s name implies a couple things. First, you come by the authority of the other person, and second, you come in his stead. Doing something in someone else’s name means not doing it in your own authority but because someone else authorized you to take the actions. When David fought Goliath, he came unto him “in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied” (I Samuel 17:45). David knew that he was not coming in his own power or authority but in that which belonged to God alone. He came with God’s authority and fought in His stead. No wonder he was confident and victorious.

Because we come in someone’s stead, the person to whom we come is expected to react to us, not on the basis of who we are, but as if the person who sent us was there himself. They are obliged to treat us as they would treat the one who authorized us to act on his behalf. When David sent servants to Nabal to ask for food, “they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David” (I Samuel 25:9). Therefore, when Nabal insulted David’s servants (who came in David’s name), he insulted David just as directly as if he had spoken to him to his face.

Now, let’s apply this to praying in the name of Jesus. First, it means that when we pray to the Father, we pray with Christ’s authority and in his stead. We pray to God because we are sent to Him by His own Son. No wonder we approach the throne of grace with boldness (Hebrews 4:16). We are sent in the authority of the Son of God to seek help from the Father in his stead! Doing so obligates the Father to treat us as He would His own Son because we come in His stead. We represent the Son when we go to the Father.

Ephesians 1:5-6:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved [i.e. Christ].

Romans 8:17:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

We are born into the family of God as children. We are accepted in the beloved. Since Christ is the beloved Son, that means that the Father accepts us as He would His own Son. Finally, we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We share in the same inheritance. The Father looks upon the redeemed as if He were looking on His Son Jesus Christ. What a blessing that Christ has told us to approach the Father in His name! What a glorious heritage!

Affirmations: I’m a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. I act in the stead and authority of Jesus Christ.

Conversation Starters: How would you receive someone coming to you in the name of Jesus Christ? Do you know about David?

Recommended Reading: I Samuel 17 & 25

John 1:12:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

The Gospel of John presents Jesus as the Son of God, and there is a motif that runs through the whole book. It's the truth that we must believe in Jesus' name. It speaks repeatedly about believing in Jesus and believing "in his name." It happens at the beginning and the end and several places in between. The first place is John 1:12 (above). The power to become the sons of God is given to them that believe on his name.

This is the fourth usage of "name" discussed in the last lesson. It refers to the esteem or value placed on someone due to what he has done. The next, John 2:23, also demonstrates this usage stating, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did." Jesus' miracles made a name for him. When they saw the miracles they believed in his name. Believing on his name is believing in him as it says in John 3:18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." We cannot believe in him if we do not know what he has done. When we learn about him from the Word we can revere him because we know the name he has made for himself.

Jesus likened himself to a shepherd because of the intimate personal knowledge the shepherd had of his sheep and the care he exercised over them. [John 10:3: To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.] The saying, "he knows his sheep *by name*," means he really knows them. He knows what they are, who they are, how they do things, why they do things. He knows what to do with them. It emphasizes the intimacy of the subjects with the name and therefore the one named.

Jesus knew the name of the Lord, and he acted in correspondence to it.

John 10:25:

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in **my Father's name**, they bear witness of me.

John 12:13:

Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the **name of the Lord**.

John 12:28:

Father, **glorify thy name**. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

He acted; He came in the name of the Lord and worked the works of God. Because of what Jesus did, God's name was glorified.

John 14:13, 14: And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

To ask in Jesus' name is not just repeating the words. It means to ask with his authority, in his stead like we saw in yesterday's lesson. It implies we understand what Jesus has done and accomplished believing we are acting in his place doing what he would if he were here. To ask in Jesus' name is to ask with his authority in his stead, for a cause he supports.

This is shown in the following verses: John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name [with my authority], he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 15:16: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name [with my authority], he may give it you." John 16:23, 24, 26: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. ²⁴ Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full... ²⁶ At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you." John 17:6, 11, 12, 26: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.... ¹¹ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*. ¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.... ²⁶ And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." The last example is in John 20. John 20:30 & 31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ But these are written, **[WHY?]** that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Isn't that wonderful? It's the last verse of John 20. "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, *you may have life*" — how? — "through his name." We learn about his name because of what we read about what he did. Then we can go and do likewise.

Affirmations: I believe in Jesus' name. I have life through Jesus' name.

Conversation Starters: Have you ever seen a miracle? Are you familiar with the closeness of the shepherd and his sheep?

Recommended Reading: John 17 & 18

John 14:13, 14:

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

Since I was a child I have always ended my prayers saying something like, “in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen?” God’s Word establishes that it is scriptural to pray in the name of Jesus (John 14:13,14; 15:16; 16:23-26). In all of these verses Jesus tells his disciples to pray to the Father in his name. However, my habit of closing my prayers with that phrase was not necessarily what Jesus meant by this direction. Using that phrase was supposed to remind me of Jesus’ command and show my willingness to obey and do as he said.

The prayers in the Bible, however, include no such phrase. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:9-13) he did not add a similar phrase at the end. Praying in the name of Jesus Christ is much more than just the repetition of a phrase. It means that we come to the Father with the knowledge that our only right to do so was Jesus’ command, and that the only reason God should grant our requests is that we come in Jesus’ name. It is not a magic formula, but an attitude of heart.

In all my prayers, I try to say, “in Jesus’ name.” However, I know that the phrase means nothing without the proper attitude of heart. Who I am makes no difference, but when I come in the name of Jesus with his authority and in his stead, I expect Romans 8:32 to happen.

Romans 8:32:

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

God did not withhold His only begotten son. Why would He withhold anything else? Praying in the name of Christ is not a secret. It is not a mysterious or magical way to get our way with God. It is simply a reminder that the right we have to approach God was guaranteed by Jesus Christ. The authority we have to make requests from God is because we come in Christ’s stead. To ask in Jesus’ name is not just repeating those words. It means to ask with an understanding of what Jesus has done and accomplished believing we are acting in his place and doing what he would if he were here. To ask in Jesus’ name is to ask with his authority, for a cause he supports.

This doesn’t just mean that every time we pray, we tack on the end, “in Christ’s name” or “in Jesus’ name,” but it’s interesting that in the early church that formula never developed. I didn’t find one prayer, in Acts or the church epistles, that ends “in the name of Jesus Christ.” [For example see: Acts 1:24; 4:24-30; Romans 15:13; I Corinthians 1:4-9, II Corinthians 13:7-9; Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:3-6, 9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; 4:12b; I Thessalonians 3:12-13; 5:23-24; II Thessalonians 1:11-12; 2:13-14, 2:16-17; 3:5, 16; Philemon 1:4-6; Hebrews 13:20-21; I Peter 5:10-11] They heal saying, “in Jesus name,” but they do not pray saying “in Jesus’ name.”

Some people use the name of Jesus Christ as if it was a magic word like “alakazam” or “open sesame.” The power comes from knowing what the name represents and that we have the authority to use that name to bring God’s Word and will to pass. God has extended to us the privilege and power to continue Christ’s work using his name. We can do whatever he would do. He is in us, and we can walk by the spirit.

Some believers think they can ask anything they want and get it by just saying, “we ask in Jesus’ name” at the end. Well, there’s certain things we just can’t ask in Jesus’ name. We can’t ask to make someone sick or to take vengeance on someone or to bring evil upon people. However, if we ask something according God’s Word and will, we don’t have to say, “I’m asking this in Jesus’ name,” because it *is* in Jesus’ name if it’s according to his person, according to his power, and according to his teachings, according to his word, in accordance with his character: that’s what it means to ask in the name of Jesus Christ.

Affirmations: I pray to the Father in Jesus’ name. God answers my prayers.

Conversation Starters: Do you pray in Jesus’ name? How do you use the name of Jesus?

Recommended Reading: Romans 8; Philemon

Acts 4:12:

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

When we study the lives and ministries of the apostles in the Bible we find them doing all sorts of things in Jesus' name. They baptized in his name. They preached in his name. They did miracles in his name. They cast out devils in his name. They did everything (like Colossians 3:17 directs) in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 3:13-16:

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. ¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; ¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Here "name" is repeated twice, "his name through faith in his name." When people believe the authority they have in the name of Jesus Christ they can use that authority like he did. Later in chapter four Peter explains.

Acts 4:8-12:

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, ⁹ If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; ¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. ¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. ¹² Neither is there salvation [wholeness in every category over anything that can be named] in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

The name of Jesus is above every name. There is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we may be saved. Only Jesus is able also to save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). Acts directs us to proclaim Christ's *name* over all the earth. The followers of the way began to be called, "Christians" in Antioch (Acts 11:26) because of the frequent and consistent use of the name of Christ.

Ephesians 1:17-23:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: ¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, ²⁰ Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and **every name that is named**, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²² And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Jesus is the Head over everything, the Head over all. When we say that name, he is there. When we invoke that name, it is as if *Jesus himself* is present. His saving power is present. His might is present. He is truly present for he is in us and we are walking as he is (I John 2:6). Colossians 1:18 states that Jesus "is the head of the body, the church" that he "is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence." God intended Jesus to have the preeminence, to be the prominent one. John 3:35 declares that "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." The Father gave all authority in heaven and earth to his son (Matthew 28:18) and to whom did the son give it? He gave it to us (Acts 1:8).

Acts 2:32-37:

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. ³³ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. ³⁴

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, ³⁵ Until I make thy foes thy footstool. ³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

God made Jesus both Lord and Christ, and we get to walk in his steps and act in his stead. What a truly blessed people we are!

Affirmations: I have faith in the name of Jesus. When I speak in Jesus' name things happen!

Conversation Starters: What do you do in Jesus' name? Do you need wholeness in any category of life?

Recommended Reading: Acts 3 & 4

Matthew 1:21:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

It was obviously very important to God that His Son be called “Jesus,” because He sent an angel to both Joseph and Mary, and told each of them separately to name their child “Jesus” (Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:31). The various names and titles of Jesus have all been selected by God and recorded in His Word for our learning. These multiple ways of describing him are helpful in understanding both the man and his mission. They also provide very valuable truth about how we can relate to him and appreciate what he has accomplished for us.

The name *Jesus* means “Savior.” In current church parlance, “Jesus” and “Savior” are nearly synonymous. “Jesus” in the New Testament is the same name as “Joshua” in the Old Testament. It is given to him because, as Matthew 1:21 says, “he shall save his people from their sins.” This identifies his mission from the moment of his birth. He saves his people from the guilt of sin (Romans 3:19; James 2:10). The shed blood of Jesus blots out our transgressions along with the guilt that accompany them (Colossians 2:14) and leaves us cleansed and righteous (Romans 5:18-19). Jesus saves his people from the dominion of sin by placing the sanctifying gift of holy spirit in their hearts by his grace (Romans 6:14-23). He also saves his people from all the consequences of sin, having borne our grief and carried our sorrow (Isaiah 53). “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Instead of death we receive eternal life and the promise of a new and glorious body in the future (Romans 6:23; 8:20-23).

Jesus is a name, which is especially sweet and precious to believers. It provides that which money cannot — a peace that passes all understanding. It cleanses from sin and heals all manner of sickness and disease. It eases wearied consciences and gives rest to the heavy laden. The Song of Solomon describes the experience of many, when it says, “your name is oil poured forth” (Song of Solomon 1:3; Psalms 133:2). Happy is the person who trusts not merely in vague notions of God’s mercy and goodness, but in “Jesus” who fully declared his Father unto us (John 1:18).

The name “Jesus” has quite a history. Being the New Testament equivalent of Joshua, both Jesus and Joshua were divinely given their names. Joshua was originally named “Hoshea,” (salvation, savior), but Moses changed his name and added the “J” prefix on the front representing “Yah,” God (Numbers 13:16). Thus, Jehoshua means “Jehovah is salvation” or “Jah our savior.”

Not only does his name foretell the salvation he would bring, but the gospels are replete with accounts where he does so. *Sōtēria*, salvation (used 45 times), and *sōzō*, save (used 110 times), occur frequently in reference to Jesus, reminding us that there is salvation in no other (Acts 4:12) and that whosoever calls on his name shall be saved (Romans 10:13). At Jesus’ birth the angels declared to the shepherds that a savior was born (Luke 2:11). Simeon also thanked God that he lived to see God’s salvation in the face of Jesus (Luke 2:30). In the many incidents of healing and deliverance we see Jesus’ power to save in how people were “made whole.” His mission was again clarified in Luke 19:10 where Jesus declared that “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Even his enemies recognized his ability to save saying, while he was on the cross, “he saved others; let him save himself” (see also Luke 23:37 & 39).

If the Lord tarries every one of us will die. That would be the end for each of us if it were not for the salvation from sin and death that Jesus provides. Thus the power and authority of the name clearly transcend languages and pass all understanding. The first century disciples healed people and expelled demons from people using the name of Jesus. They may have spoken Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, or whatever. The name of Jesus spoken today in English, Spanish, or any other modern language has the same power to transform lives. We have the authority to use that name according to the Word of God which communicated it to us. When we speak in his name it is as if he were here himself. Indeed, he is for it is Christ in us the hope of glory. He sits at God’s right hand and we are seated with him.

Affirmations: Jesus’ name is sweet and precious to me. My sin has been cleansed and I am righteous.

Conversation Starters: Do you know what the name “Jesus” means? What is the only name by which we must be saved?

Recommended Reading: Matthew 1

I Corinthians 15:57-58:

But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

It's my personal opinion that Jesus of Nazareth was given more titles than any other person in history. A "title" is an appellation of rank, office, dignity, or honor. "Barak Obama" is the personal name of the man who currently occupies the White House in Washington, D.C. He wears numerous titles, such as "President of the United States," "Chief Executive," and "Commander-in-Chief." We have no problem in understanding the difference between a man's name and the titles that reflect his office, rank, and position. Jesus was certainly afforded many titles which exalted and glorified him.

The most frequently used title for Jesus in the New Testament is the title "Lord." The term "lord" is used in three distinct ways in the New Testament. The first is as a common form of polite address, similar to the English word "sir." The second usage refers to a slave owner or "master." Here it is applied in a figurative sense to Jesus. He is our master, we are his *douloi*, slaves. The third usage is the imperial usage referring to one who is sovereign.

In the first century, the Roman emperors demanded a loyalty oath from their subjects by which they were required to confess "Caesar is Lord." Christians were martyred for refusing to comply. Instead, they proclaimed, "Jesus is Lord." To call Jesus "Lord" was radical not only from a Roman standpoint but especially from a Jewish standpoint, for it is the title given to God Himself in the Old Testament.

In everyday Aramaic, *mari* was a very respectful form of polite address, well above "teacher" and similar to "Rabbi." In Greek this has at times been translated as *kurios*. While the term *mari* expressed the relationship between Jesus and his disciples during his life, the Greek *kurios* came to represent his lordship over the world.

In Romans 10:9-13 Paul emphasized the salvific value of the title, and stated that confessing by mouth (*homologeō*) the belief that Jesus is Lord (*kyrion Iesoun*) is necessary for one's salvation. The high frequency of the use of the term *kurios* in the Acts indicates how natural it was for early Christians to refer to Jesus in this way. (Acts has more uses of *kurios* than any other New Testament book.) This title along with "Christ" has persisted among Christians as the predominant perception of Jesus.

In the New Testament, *Lord* is the most frequently used title for Jesus Christ appearing over 700 times in the New Testament. Although we rarely use this term in our daily lives, we are all quite familiar with another word: "boss." That is basically what *Lord* means — one possessing authority, power, and control. Although Satan tries to convince us that liberty is found in doing what we want, true freedom is acquired only through submission to Christ's loving lordship.

Even death cannot release anyone from the authority of God's Son. He is Lord of both the living and the dead. All people must decide to either yield to or rebel against him, but they have the opportunity to make this choice only while they live. After death, they will acknowledge Christ's lordship through accountability to him. If we have not bowed the knee to Jesus in life, we will be forced to bow to it in the judgment.

Scripture ascribes glory to Jesus Christ in numerous ways, but in naming him "Lord" (*kurios*) makes an ultimate statement. Indeed Paul testifies that God the Father bestowed on the Son "the name that is above every man" in order that all creation might acknowledge Jesus Christ as "Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). "Lord" thus serves as the title *par excellence* for Jesus Christ.

But Paul was by no means the first to apply this sacred title to Jesus. The Old Testament had predicted that a deliverer would come in the name of Lord. Jesus invites reflection on this logically difficult truth in Mark 12:36, asking what David meant quoting Psalms 110:1, "The Lord [*Jehovah*] says to my Lord [*adon*]. . ." Peter, in Acts 2:34, repeats this declaration.

God and Jesus are both referred to as Lord. God originally intended Adam to be Lord, but he abdicated the responsibility. Jesus, the second Adam, reassumed this lordship. Jesus presides in power at the Father's right hand (Ephesians 1:20; Hebrew 1:3), where he intercedes for God's people (Romans 8:34) as their advocate (I John 2:1) and from whence, he will return to judge the world (II Thessalonians 1:7-8). Therefore Isaiah's counsel to "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself" is restated by Peter who commands us to "sanctify Christ as Lord" (I Peter 3:15 ASV NAS).

Affirmations: Jesus is my lord. I am thrilled to serve my lord.

Conversation Starters: Have you made Jesus lord of your life? Do you call Jesus Lord?

Recommended Reading: Romans 10

John 1:41-42a:

He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. . . .

We will handle the three titles “Messiah,” “Christ” and “Anointed One” together since they all mean the same thing. “Messiah” is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *mashiah*, which means, “anointed.” It is used twice of Jesus in the New Testament (John 1:41 & 4:25). *Mashiah* occurs 39 times in the Old Testament and is only translated “Messiah” twice in the KJV (Daniel 9:25 & 26). The other 37 times it is translated “anointed.” *Christos*, is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *mashiah*. It occurs over 500 times in the New Testament and is always translated “Christ.” *Christos* has the same meaning, from *chriō*, “to anoint” (Matthew 1:16; Acts 2:30 & 31).

The Old Testament records the anointing with oil of priests (Exodus 29:1-9), kings (I Samuel 10:1; II Samuel 2:4; I Kings 1:34), and sometimes prophets (I Kings 19:16b). The prophet Isaiah recognizes his own anointing (to preach good news to the poor, Isaiah 61:1) and that of Cyrus, king of Persia (to “subdue nations, Isaiah 45:1), apparently as coming directly from the Lord without the usual ceremony of initiation. As a noun, the Lord’s “anointed” usually refers to a king (I Samuel 12:3; I Samuel 12:5), while designation of a priest (Leviticus 4:5) or the patriarchs (Psalms 105:15) is less common.

By the time Jesus was born, a number of passages in the Hebrew Bible were understood to refer to a specific anointed person who would bring about the redemption of Israel, and that person was called “the Christ” (Acts 2:27; Acts 2:31). The Samaritans were looking for him (John 4:24). The Jews looked for him and expected him to perform great miracles (John 7:31). He was to be the son of David (Matthew 22:42) and, like David, come from Bethlehem (John 7:41-42).

The word “Christ” is used to identify Jesus of Nazareth as that person whom God anointed to be the redeemer of mankind. It thus often appears as a title in the phrase “Jesus the Christ” (Acts 5:42; 9:22; 17:3) or “the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18:28). Peter referred to him as “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Very frequently the word is coupled with the name of Jesus and appears to be virtually a second name—“Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38; 3:6; 9:34; 10:36; Romans 1:6-8; I Corinthians 1:6-10)—though not a surname, because “Christ Jesus” is also commonly used (I Corinthians 1:1-30; Galatians 2:4). In close proximity in the same chapter, Jesus is called “Jesus Christ” (Galatians 3:22), “Christ” (3:24) and “Christ Jesus” (3:26).

Galatians 3:22-26:

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of **Jesus Christ** might be given to them that believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto **Christ**, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. ²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in **Christ Jesus**.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews picks up on the Old Testament anointing of priests and applies the same in relation to Jesus (1:9; 5:8-10; 7:1-28). The name occurs also in the Petrine Epistles (I Peter 1:13; 3:15; II Peter 1:1-2, 16; 3:18), as well as those of James (1:1; 2:1) and Jude (Jude 1, 4, 17, 21). Revelation describes Jesus as the Anointed One when looking forward to the end when the kingdom and salvation of the Lord and his Messiah will enjoy an eternal and full dominion (Revelation 11:15; 12:10; 20:4 & 6).

Hebrews 1:9:

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

The anointing of Jesus as Christ puts him above the rest of us. Please don’t ever think he was merely a man. He was the grandest and most formidable man that ever lived. The significance of the title “Christ” lies in the fact that it was granted to Jesus by virtue of his fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and by his resurrection from the dead. No one else bears the name Christ other than Jesus. It is significant that early disciples of Jesus were not called “Jesusites” but “Christians,” followers of Christ (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). Even though it was begun as a derogatory appellation the believers co-opted it and wore the label with pride for they knew they had Christ in them and belonged to him (I Corinthians 3:23; 15:23; Galatians 5:24).

Affirmations: I have found the Messiah. I have Christ in me the hope of glory.

Conversation Starters: Do you know what Christ means? Why/when was Jesus anointed?

Recommended Reading: Galatians 3 & 4

Ephesians 1:1:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

There are two basic ways in which the name “Jesus” and the title “Christ” occur in scripture. One occurs first, and the other follows. So frequent are these two used together that some, thinking according to contemporary patterns, consider “Jesus” his first name and “Christ” his last name. However, these two are also found in reverse order, “Christ Jesus.” As with everything recorded in God’s Word there is always a reason for the distinctions He makes. Although we may not fathom the reasons for the many differences, they do exist.

E. W. Bullinger has correctly noted that nowhere in the New Testament is it recorded that his followers ever address him as “Jesus” but used “Master” or “Lord” instead. He also suggests that his followers today should do the same. Bullinger notes that it was only demons (Matthew 8:29) or Jesus’ enemies (Acts 4:18) who irreverently called him “Jesus.” (Companion Bible, Appendix 98, X JESUS) However we must note that God Himself continued to use the name “Jesus” without any adornment when addressing His church (Acts 1:1,11,14,16; 2:32,36; 3:13,26; 4:2,13,18,27,30; 5:30,40; 7:45,55; 8:5; 9:17,27; 13:23,33; 18:5; 28:23 Romans 3:26; 8:11; I Corinthians 12:3; II Corinthians 4:10,14; Ephesians 4:21; I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:14; Hebrews 2:9; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:2,24; 13:12; I John 5:5; Revelation 14:12; 17:6; 20:4), albeit much less frequently. Indeed, Jesus used it of himself (Acts 26:15; Revelation 22:16). He even introduced himself that way (Acts 9:5) so I see no reason why we should not use it either.

“Christ” is a title of service. The anointing designated the ordination to do the task, function or job for which the anointing was done. Simply put, “Christ” refers to the mission he performed and “Jesus” identifies the one who performed it.

Jesus Christ: The name “Jesus” is the name associated with “the shame” that he endured in order to “save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 12:2). In the combination of these two names, the former is emphatic by its position, the second being subsidiary and explanatory. In the Gospels it means “Jesus the Messiah.” In the Epistles it means “Jesus Who humbled himself but is now exalted and glorified as Christ.” Care should be taken to note the various readings, because the readings are frequently different. (Companion Bible, Appendix 98, XI JESUS CHRIST) Jesus Christ identifies the humility of service rendered obediently to his Father, God (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1). When we read “Jesus Christ” we should think of the humbled one who is now exalted or the suffering one who is now glorified.

Christ Jesus: This is the converse of “Jesus Christ” and denotes the now exalted one, who once humbled himself. (Companion Bible, Appendix 98, XII CHRIST JESUS) The title “Christ” preceding “Jesus” emphasizes the authority of the anointed one to rule. It often occurs in verses emphasizing rulership, legal rights, privileges and responsibilities (Philippians 3:14; I Timothy 1:12). The phrase “in Christ Jesus” (when it is accurately translated from the Greek text) often refers to our identification with him in glory (Ephesians 2:6,10; Philippians 2:5).

Indeed when two titles occur together it is generally true that the first is the emphatic one, the second being subsidiary and explanatory. (e.g. Lord Jesus = Jesus as Lord Acts 1:21; 7:59; Romans 10:9)

Warning: This is a very simplistic explanation of these two major combinations of “Jesus” and “Christ.” Although there is frequently great benefit derived from simple and general differences like those between believing and works, law and grace, salvation and rewards, standing and state, I do not want to suggest that the distinctions I noted above as a hard or fast rule. It is important to see distinctions where God makes a difference even though we may not comprehend why they exist.

It is also important that we understand that there are so many textual variants when it comes the words Jesus, Christ, and Lord that even identifying which is which is difficult. The Word Study Concordance has a section at the back of the book on variants. By my count it lists 263 variants for Jesus, 129 variants for Christ and 123 variants for Lord. Therefore interpretations based on word order must be very carefully considered.

Affirmations: I am a joint-heir with Christ. I identify with Christ Jesus my Lord.

Conversation Starters: Why use both “Jesus Christ” and “Christ Jesus?” Do you have the anointing?

Recommended Reading: Acts 1 & 2

II Peter 3:18:

But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

In his study on the names of Jesus E. W. Bullinger states:

“So little attention has been paid to these titles of the Lord Jesus Christ, that few imagine there is any significance in their choice or order. But enough has already been said to convince us of the importance of accuracy in noticing and studying every detail. So numerous are these variations, that in Paul’s epistles alone there are seven-teen different combinations of the words “Lord,” “Jesus” and “Christ.” This includes the article, and in three cases the word “our.”

Unless these words are used at random, there must be a reason why, if certain words are used, no other words would have answered the same purpose. For example, if it says “Jesus Christ” we must believe that “Christ Jesus” would not have been appropriate. Whether we may ever discover a reason, or whether the reason I now submit may be the right one, does not alter the fact.”

For example, although “Jesus” means savior; it doesn’t merely mean savior. There is another word for that, the Greek *sōtēr*, “savior.” “Jesus” means properly “Jehovah our savior.” Yes Matthew 1:21 gives us the reason for his name being called “Jesus”—“he shall save His people from their sins.” Therefore “Jesus” was the name of his earthly life and signified his purpose as the sin-bearer, the sufferer, the man of sorrows. It was the name associated with his sacrifice and shame. It was the name under which he was crucified. “This is Jesus” was the inscription on the cross. Therefore whenever we read the word “Jesus” alone, it bids us to think of “the man of sorrows” who humbled Himself and died for us.

Although the name occurs almost 700 times, it never occurs with a modifying adjective in God’s Word. There is no need for expressions like, “sweet Jesus,” “blessed Jesus” or “dear Jesus” for “Jesus” alone captures all the sweetness, blessedness and dearness that is possible. It stands out in all its beauty; nothing can be added to the perfection of his person, works or ways.

Yes, Jesus was his earthly name, and suffering, sorrow, and death were his earthly lot. However, death was not the end of his mission or his work. God raised him from the dead, and then everything changed. Acts 2:36 records that “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” The suffering savior has become the glorified “Lord and Christ.” God magnified the name—before associated with his sorrow—to a name exalted above all dominion and power stating in Philippians 2:10,11 that “at the name of Jesus (not the Lord or Christ) every knee shall bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

One need only note the uses of the words to see a great line of demarcation. The name “Jesus” alone is used predominantly before his ascension. The Gospels contain 612 uses of “Jesus,” and the other New Testament books have only 71 (out of which 38 are in the transitional book of the Acts). Similarly; the four Gospels contain 56 uses of “Christ” alone while the other New Testament books have 256 occurrences. Thus the name “Jesus” is primarily associated with his earthly ministry, and “Christ” with the completion of his redemptive work.

To be sure, God has a purpose for everything He says. . . where he says it, why He says it, when He says it, how He says it and to whom He says it. He doesn’t use words haphazardly, and although we may never understand all the nuances of different name and title combinations, He has a reason for them. Following are some of the many different combinations of “Jesus” with other names and titles are listed below:

Christ Jesus	Jesus of Nazareth	Lord Jesus
Christ Jesus my Lord	the King of the Jews	Lord Jesus Christ
Christ Jesus our Lord	Jesus our Lord	Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Jesus Christ	Jesus the Christ	Our Savior Jesus Christ
Jesus Christ our Lord	Jesus the Nazarene	
Jesus Christ our Savior	Jesus, the Son of God	

Although all the titles and combinations of the same refer to one and the same person, the different titles and their combinations change the emphasis and indicate different aspects of the one unique and singularly significant individual known as both the son of God and the son of man.

Affirmations: I love my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is my personal lord and savior.

Conversation Starters: Why does Jesus have so many titles? Why are personal pronouns used with Jesus’ name and titles?

Recommended Reading: Acts 3 & 4

John 6:35:

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

A “description” is a verbal representation of the person focusing on an attribute or attributes. For example, when Jesus is referred to as “the desire of all nations” (Haggai 2:7), or “merciful and faithful high priest” (Hebrew 2:17), he is being described, not technically “named.” Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between them, as when John the Baptist saw Jesus and said to his disciples, “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). What John may have meant as a description composed in the form of the figure of speech *hypocatastasis*, has been understood subsequently by the church today as a name of Jesus. Scripturally the term Lamb of God is used to represent Jesus as the prophetic Passover lamb of the Old Testament. No one but John ever addressed Jesus as the Lamb of God, but after his death on the cross, which happened at the same time as the slaughter of the other Passover lambs, Jesus has been clearly seen as such

I have not found any two lists of the names and titles of Jesus composed by different people or organizations that are identical. The longest one I found had over 900 names. Herbert Gabhart’s list has 366 names, one for every day of the year. James Large lists 280. My initial list had 318 names and after my latest edit it was down to 244 names. My greatest difficulty is distinguishing between a name and a description. Those names, titles and descriptions that best reveal Jesus’ life and ministry to me, I find more reasons to give more access to my list. Also adding to my difficulty is my over 50 years of exposure to what my teachers taught me. Their favorites had become my favorites. I find more reasons to give the names, titles and descriptions that best reveal Jesus’ life and ministry to me more access to my list.

There is one list that is consistently repeated and verified by teacher after teacher — the metaphoric descriptions that Jesus made of his life and ministry. These are seven powerful and provocative statements. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection, and the impact of these statements is tremendous. They are also known as the “I am” statements from the Gospel of John. They are listed below and are accompanied by the seven miracles of John’s Gospel that correspond and illustrate the truths.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. “I am the bread of life.” John 6:35, 41, 48-51 | Feeding the 5000 (John 6:1-5). |
| 2. “I am the light of world.” John 8:12, 9:5 | Healing The Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41). |
| 3. “I am the door of the sheep.” John 10:7, 9 | The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9) |
| 4. “I am the good shepherd.” John 10:11, 14 | Walking on the Water (John 6:16-25). |
| 5. “I am the resurrection, and the life.” John 11:25 | Raising Lazarus From The Dead (John 11:1-44). |
| 6. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” John 14:6 | Healing the Official’s Son (John 4:43-54). |
| 7. “I am the true vine.” John 15:1, 5 | Water Into Wine (John 2:1-11) |

A *metaphor* is figure of speech of comparison using the verb “to be.” Jesus offers these seven “I am” word pictures to help us understand his identity. The potency of these statements is in their power to communicate to us how Jesus presented himself and his ministry. When Jesus used the phrase “I AM,” he disclosed specific revelation regarding his identity, mission and nature. They will help us see and believe who Jesus claimed to be, as he represented himself by comparing himself to seven common and understood elements in the eastern culture. They are like names he chose for himself. They definitely help us answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” He is the Bread to nourish and sustain us, the Light to show us the way to go, the Door to give us entry, the Shepherd to guide and provide for us, the Resurrection upon which to hope and wait, the Life to live until then, the Way of salvation in which to trust and the Vine in which to abide.

Affirmations: Jesus sustains my life as the bread of life. Jesus has quenched my thirst.

Conversation Starters: How many names and titles of Jesus do you know? How did Jesus feed the 5,000?

Recommended Reading: John 1 & 2

John 6:47-51: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am that bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John chapter six contains the first of Jesus' "I am" statements. It is spoken following the miracle of feeding the five thousand and in response to the people's request for a sign. The people who had eaten, knew that this was a miracle, and that a prophet was in their midst. They were so taken that they were going to try to take Jesus by force and make him their king. It is to these people, on the next day (vs 22-25), that Jesus is having this discourse concerning this amazing claim. Jesus referred to himself three times as bread (vss 35, 48 and 51), and the Jews murmured at him because of the statement (vs 41). Neither did he refer to just any bread, but he claimed to be the bread sent down from heaven which is more nourishing and life sustaining than the manna eaten in the wilderness (Exodus 16:13-18). Jesus knew the incredulity of the people, who sought him out because their bellies were filled by the five barley loaves and two small fish (John 6:9).

Jesus challenged them to "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" (vs 27). He told the people to "believe on him whom He hath sent" (vs 29). When the people brought up the manna from the wilderness, Jesus claimed to be the "true bread from heaven" that was so much more nourishing and sustaining.

They asked the lord to "evermore give us this bread" (vs 34). They wanted their physical hunger satisfied, but Jesus promised to provide so much more. He claimed he would provide in such a way that they would never hunger and thirst again. He promised everlasting life to those who believeth on him. Then the Jews murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven" (vs 41).

When confronted with their skepticism Jesus made one of those emphatic, "verily, verily" statements.

John 6:47-51:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am that bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Herein lies the key for all of us who intend to partake of the bread of life. We must eat it. The Jews unwilling to believe scoffed at Jesus requirement to eat of his flesh and drink of his blood. (This was exactly what Israel was required to do with the flesh of the Passover lamb. Christ would be our final and ultimate Passover which was sacrificed for us (I Corinthians 5:7.) This was again one of those emphatic, "verily, verily" statements.

John 6:53:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

God sustained the children of Israel for 40 years in the wilderness with the manna from heaven, supplying what they needed in a miraculous way. But that manna (which was a type of Christ) could not meet their spiritual needs as could the "bread of life" that came down from heaven in the person of Jesus the Messiah. God would sustain His people for much more than 40 years. This bread from heaven would sustain eternal life forever. In Jesus our spiritual hunger is satisfied and our spiritual thirst is quenched (John 4:13-14; 7:37-39).

How is this accomplished? For us it happened through the gift of holy spirit, whereby we were sealed (Ephesians 1:13) as Jesus was (vs 27). This establishes and guarantees our eternal life. Our abundant life is realized as we eat of Jesus' flesh now. This we do just as he taught us. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall **live by me**" (vs 57). Our search for spiritual fulfillment comes to an end and the God shaped hole in our heart is finally filled when we like Paul learn to live through him (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:11-13).

Affirmations: Jesus is the bread that nourishes me. Jesus satisfies my hunger and thirst.

Conversation Starters: For what do you labor? What is the bread of life?

Recommended Reading: John 6 & 7

John 8:12:

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. . . 9:5: As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

”I am the light of the world” is the second of seven “I am” declarations of Jesus, recorded only in the gospel of John. It identifies a unique purpose. In declaring himself to be the Light of the world, Jesus was claiming that he is the exclusive source of spiritual truth available to mankind.

Physical light allows us to perceive and learn of our Creator’s handiwork in the things we see. However, there is another light, Jesus describes in John 8:12 when he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life.” The metaphor used by the Lord in this verse speaks of the light of the truth of God’s Word. Those who perceive the true Light will never walk in spiritual darkness. (See also John 1:9; 3:19; 9:5.)

Physical light is necessary for physical life. In the same way, spiritual light is necessary for spiritual life. Jesus promised that his followers would *never* walk in darkness but would have the necessary light to successfully journey through life. He both practiced and taught this truth to his disciples. The record of the raising of Lazarus paints a beautiful picture of this promised truth. Jesus had the light necessary to transverse this very emotional and trying situation. He was able to walk by the spirit using revelation manifestations.

John 11:9-15:

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. ¹¹ These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. ¹² Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. ¹³ Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

We often think of Jesus as our light. At the beginning of John’s gospel Jesus was described as “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Later when Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,” he was claiming to be that true light which was promised to come. It was a direct claim to be the Messiah, and the people knew it. That is why they accused him of lying (John 8:13).

Isaiah 42:6-7 is prophetic of the Messiah and speaks of him as a light to the gentiles. This is also what Simeon declared in Luke 2:30-32 who referred to Isaiah’s prophecy. When Jesus says, “I am the light of the world,” he is making the claim to be the prophesied Messiah.

The light, of course, is a magnificent metaphor. Light is the active power that dispels darkness, and Jesus Christ is the light of truth that dispels the darkness of falsehood. Jesus Christ is the light of wisdom that dispels the darkness of ignorance. Jesus Christ is the light of holiness that dispels the darkness of impurity. Jesus Christ is the light of joy that dispels the darkness of sorrow. Jesus Christ is the light of life that dispels the darkness of death. Ephesians 5:8-14 characterizes us as being transformed from darkness to light. Colossians 1:13 also assures us that we have been delivered from the power of darkness.

Jesus says, “I am the light of the world,” but then he also quickly says that “you are the light of the world,” and what a challenge that is for each one of us. “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. . . . Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven. In statement 2, we learn that through Him we gain spiritual understanding and wisdom for living.

Affirmations: Jesus illumines me. God and his son Jesus are my source of truth.

Conversation Starters: Who is the light of the world? Where do you go for spiritual understanding and wisdom?

Recommended Reading: John 11; Isaiah 42

John 10:7-9:

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

The third and fourth “I am” statements by Jesus are found in the same discourse in John 10. These two very related statements “I am the door of the sheep” and “I am the good shepherd” are understood only as they relate to the Eastern shepherd. The western mind may think the two statements are duplicitous wondering how both could be accurate. However, the eastern people of the Bible lands knew that the good shepherd was indeed the door of the sheep.

What seems unusual and unrelated to our western minds is common and clear to the Eastern people to whom Jesus spoke. When Jesus spoke of the door of the sheep he was alluding to the entryway into the sheepfold which actually had no door other than the shepherd himself.

The sheepfold was an enclosure composed of stone or brush which formed a sort of corral for the sheep where the shepherd would resort with his sheep in the evening. The entry had no door or gate as do our modern enclosures. Instead the Eastern shepherd would place himself in the opening and sleep there during the night allowing nothing to enter or leave keeping the sheep in the fold protected.

Often, many shepherds in a community would share a pen. but, with only one entry, only one would need to be the gatekeeper for the night. The gatekeeper guarded the door and only let in the rightful shepherds. A thief would have to sneak in another way. When it was time to leave the pen, the sheep actually knew their shepherd’s voice and would follow him whenever and wherever he led them out to pasture.

The impact of the metaphor is explained in the very next verse. Jesus said in John 10:9, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” Jesus is the door of the sheepfold who provides salvation and pasture for his flock. Comparing himself to “the door of the sheep” and “the good shepherd” was simply another way of saying that he was the Messiah. In declaring that He is “the door of the sheep” in John 10:7, Jesus is making a contrast between Himself and the religious leaders who were thieves and robbers seeking to enter the sheepfold stealthily.

Jesus uses the image of the door of the sheepfold to convey two important things. The first of these is that God has a sanctuary, a safe place to bring His sheep where He will save and keep them safe forever. Secondly, the only way to get into this sanctuary is through its one and only door, Jesus Christ. The only access we have to God is through Christ, and Him alone.

As his name suggests salvation is found through Jesus. He is the door to the Kingdom of God, and no one can enter except through Him (John 3:3; 14:6). Having entered through Him we enjoy the freedom to come and go as we please, abiding in peace in the midst of plenty. As “the door of the sheepfold” Jesus has given us free and unlimited access to his kingdom. The sheep come into the fold for safety and go out to pasture, all under the shepherd’s guidance.

Jesus says, “By me if anyone enters, he will be saved” which is explained as being given life (John 10:10), eternal life (John 10:28). Jesus gives life to his sheep — and ONLY his sheep — so they may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10). When Jesus says, “I am the door,” he is presenting himself as the only way to salvation; salvation is not possible without him for he declared and confirmed that others who offer salvation are “thieves” and “robbers.”

There is great assurance that comes with being in the fold having entered by “the door.” As followers of Christ, Jesus is both our shepherd and the door to the sheepfold who provides for all our needs. Knowing that the world is full of predators whose sole intent is to destroy us (I Peter 5:8), we take comfort knowing we are always under his protection. It establishes our hope so that we are fully confident that “when the Chief Shepherd appears, [we] will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (I Peter 5:4).

This statement is a part of Jesus’ teaching after He had healed the man born blind. That miracle verified and established Jesus’ claim to be the door. After being healed, the man had been brought to the Pharisees and interrogated. Because he refused to deny that Jesus had healed him, he was put out of the synagogue. Jesus went and found him and invited him to believe in the “son of man.” After the man declared that he believed, Jesus turned and confronted the Pharisees who were the ones truly blind to whom Jesus really was. The discourse in John 10 was spoken directly from the preceding narrative. The blind man found the door to the sheepfold and entered. The religious leaders were the thieves and robbers who refused to acknowledge Jesus as the door. The point of Jesus’ statement “I am the door” is that the Pharisees were rejecting their only access to God. Jesus provided access and the man previously blind accepted it. The Pharisees did not. The same choice must be made today. Let’s be sure to choose wisely — accept entrance and go in and out to enjoy the abundant life available to us.

Affirmations: Though Jesus I have all God has made available. Jesus is my entry to the eternal life.

Conversation Starters: Are you familiar with Eastern shepherds? Are you aware of the doorway to heaven?

Recommended Reading: John 9 & 10

John 10:11,14:

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

In John 10 Jesus declared, “I am the good shepherd.” He feeds and cares for his people even to the point of laying down his life for them. I Peter 5:4 refers to Jesus as “the Chief Shepherd,” I Peter 2:25 calls him “the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” and Hebrews 13:20 declares him to be “that great shepherd of the sheep.” Looking forward to the Messiah’s arrival and reign, Ezekiel promised God’s people in the Old Testament that one day they would all have “one shepherd” (Ezekiel 37:24).

The sheep/shepherd analogy is frequently mentioned in the Bible. Its prominence is due to three basic reasons. 1. The importance of sheep to the agricultural and nomadic life-style of the Hebrews, 2. the qualities of sheep and shepherds that made them particularly apt sources of metaphors for spiritual realities, and 3. the significance of sheep/lambs in the sacrificial system.

What metaphor could be more expressive of tender and constant oversight than this one. It’s an illustration people could easily identify with in their cultural context. The helplessness of sheep requires that good shepherds exercise great care and compassion over them (Isaiah 40:11). The theme of the wandering sheep sought by his watchful shepherd is repeated throughout the scriptures (I Peter 2:25).

Jesus calling himself a “good” shepherd, alerts us to the fact that there may be bad shepherds, too. Well, the good shepherd has certain attributes: He gives his life for the sheep, he knows his sheep individually speaking and calling them by name, his sheep know him, and his sheep respond to his voice. Knowing and calling his sheep by name indicates the shepherd’s personal regard for each one of his flock. Indeed, he writes their names in the Lamb’s book of life (Revelation 13:8; 21:27).

Jacob, Moses and David were noted leaders whose histories included shepherding sheep. The word “shepherd,” *ra’ah*, means one who tends to or one who looks after. It is also translated “pastor.” In Jeremiah 3:15, God said “And I will give you pastors according to my heart which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding and it shall come to pass when you be multiplied and increased in the land. . . .” These pastors were to supply knowledge and understanding that would provide increase. However, in order for sheep to have the protection and receive the knowledge and understanding of a shepherd, they must follow the shepherd.

The religious leaders like the hireling described in John would leave the sheep when danger approached. They cared more about their own safety and security than the sheep’s. They assumed the responsibility of leading God’s people, but they did not do what was best for them. They didn’t care for the weak (Luke 20:47) or feed them with God’s truth (Matthew 16:12). They only looked out for themselves (Luke 20:46). Jesus, on the other hand, loved his sheep and gave his own life for them.

The primary characteristic of the good shepherd is that he loves unto death; he is willing to die for the sheep. The disciples were amazed that Jesus loved them so much he was willing to die for them. The Bible has so many awestruck references to this, like. “Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5a). “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,” (Romans 5:8). “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (I Peter 2:24 ESV). “Who [Jesus] through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God,” (Hebrews 9:14). The shepherd and bishop of our souls gave his life and shed his blood for us, but that is the mark of the Good Shepherd.

The title Chief Shepherd is a very interesting description of Jesus. It’s the Greek word *archipoiḗn* which is a compound word comprised of the two Greek words: *archē*, meaning “commencement, first, beginning, author, principle;” and *poiḗn*, meaning “pastor or shepherd.” Jesus is our Chief (first, primary or principle) Shepherd. All other servant-leaders in the church are under-shepherds who care for God’s people under his oversight. Christ is the Chief Shepherd and head of the Church. Under-shepherds function in his behalf caring for God’s people. Remember shepherds lead the sheep, and all undershepherders function under the direction of the Chief Shepherd.

Jesus is Chief Shepherd because He authored our faith. He originated it and perfects it (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus is Chief Shepherd because He led us to God, to salvation and eternal life (John 14:6; John 10:7-18). He navigates the way and ensures all of us who follow his lead of the eternal life that he provides. At the new birth we receive his faith, the faith of Jesus Christ, and are made new creations in him.

Undershepherding requires frequent, repeated contact. When God brings people our way let’s follow up on them and make sure they are getting what they need and want. We surely do not want to barge into people’s lives trying to direct them, but we do want to let people know where we are going in case they want to follow along. Following up is simply reconnecting to see if there is desire for continued relationship building. As you settle into the MFC routine, be sure to get back to the hungry people you have talked to.

You can develop your home fellowship by making time for people.

Let me leave you with the wonderful benediction at the end of the letter to the Hebrews that says, “May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory now and forever,” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Affirmations: Jesus is my good shepherd. Jesus died for me.

Conversation Starters: Who is the good shepherd? Did you know Moses and David were shepherds?

Recommended Reading: I Peter 2 & 5

John 11:25-26:

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

”I am the resurrection and the life” is the fifth of the seven “I am” statements of Jesus. It was spoken to only one person, Jesus’ beloved friend Martha of Bethany. Lazarus was dead, and Jesus went to Bethany to raise him from the dead. Earlier, Jesus had heard that his good friend Lazarus was sick, but instead of leaving immediately, Jesus stayed where he was for two more days (John 11:6).

He used this occasion to teach his disciples about walking by the spirit. He had earlier taught them that he was the light of the world and used the illustration of how walking in the daylight allowed one to find his way to explain his decision to now visit Bethany, Judea. The disciples, concerned for his safety, tried to dissuade him, but he used a walking in daylight illustration to assure them of their safety. He further informed them that Lazarus was dead, and their mission was to raise him from the dead (vss 7-16).

When Jesus arrived, he met Martha away from the house. He then found out Lazarus had been dead four days so even if he had left immediately upon receiving the sisters request for help he would not have gotten there before his death. We find out only later how significant it was that the one to be raised was dead for more than three days and three nights. Martha went out to meet Jesus saying, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (vs 21). Martha was so sure of Jesus authority over sickness that she added, “I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee” (vs 22). She wanted Jesus to resurrect her brother but hesitated to ask. Jesus replied by assuring Martha that her brother would rise again. Martha expected him to arise in the resurrection of the just and said so. That’s when Jesus makes his fifth “I Am” statement recorded in John’s gospel, “I am the resurrection and the life.” He follows it with a promise which asserted his power over death, “whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (vs 26). Jesus knew that if Martha believed his statement she would be comforted so he asked her specifically, “Believest thou this?” She then replied in the affirmative, “Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God” (vs 27).

When Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life,” he was claiming to be the source of both. There is no resurrection apart from Christ, and there is no eternal life apart from Christ. In asserting his power over death, he knew that death has no ultimate power over him. Eternal life is available to those who believe in him so that they share his triumph over death (I John 5:11-13). Believers who sleep in Jesus (I Thessalonians 4:14) will experience resurrection because it is impossible for death to defeat them (I Corinthians 15:53-57).

Outside the tomb, Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” and he that was dead came forth (vss 43-44). It’s one thing to *claim* to be the resurrection and the life, but Jesus proved it by raising Lazarus who was four days dead. Truly, with Christ, death is but “sleep” (I Thessalonians 4:13). Death has no dominion over him who is life itself, nor does death have dominion over those who are in him (I Corinthians 15:54-55). Because he lives, we live. Because he is life, we have life eternally.

Jesus’ statement that he is the resurrection and the life provides a godly perspective on death. Death is simply sleep; if it happens resurrection is guaranteed. Victory over death is a present reality for believers. The length of our sleep is inconsequential, for the moment of one’s death becomes in our consciousness the moment of awakening to the trump of God to meet Christ in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). The Lord had already said that whoever believes in him would not perish but would have eternal life (John 3:16). Here in John 11 he provided more detail, saying that even though a believer experiences physical death, he will still have life.

After presenting Himself as the resurrection and the life, Jesus asked Martha an all-important question: “Do you believe this?” (vs 26). May Martha’s answer be ours as well: “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into the world” (vs 27).

Affirmations: I know I have passed from death unto life. I believe Jesus is the Christ, the son of God.

Conversation Starters: Do you believe in a resurrection? Have you found a reason to live?

Recommended Reading: John 11 & 12

John 14:6:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, [and] the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The “I am” saying of Jesus in today’s lesson certainly ranks among the most well-known statements of our Lord. It appears in what has been called Jesus’ “Farewell Discourse.” Jesus delivered it on the eve of his arrest, torture and crucifixion. After telling them of his imminent departure, he adds, “And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know” (John 14:4). Thomas perplexed responds, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” (John 14:6). Jesus’ response was singular and pointed regarding the way after which Thomas inquired. Bullinger acknowledges it as a *hendiatris* in which three things are said and one thing is meant.

The Greek texts add an “and” between “way” and “truth.” We should understand the statement to mean: “I am the way, yes—the true and living way; for no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Of course Jesus is the truth (Matthew 22:16) and the life (John 11:25), but the context clearly shows that the subject of Thomas’ question is “the way.” The other two nouns, “the truth” and “the life,” are used to define the nature and character of the way about which Thomas inquired.

”Truth” and “life” are central to the message of the gospel of John. “Truth” is used in John 25 times and only 7 times in the other gospels. Jesus is the source and teacher of truth (Matthew 22:16; Mark 12:14; John 1:14,17), and that truth sets people free (John 8:32-38). “Life,” *zoē*, is used 38 times in John and only 17 times in the three other gospels. This life that Jesus gives is what sustains us (John 6:27).

This “I am” statement is very similar to Jesus’ claim to be the Door of the Sheep in John 10:7-9. There is only one God, and He has only one kingdom with only one entrance—Jesus Christ. Jesus used the definite article to distinguish Himself as “the way.” Although there are other ways (like the way of Balaam [II Peter 2:15] and the way of Cain [Jude 11], Jesus is the only true and living way.

A “way” is a path or route, and the disciples had expressed their confusion about where he was going and how they could follow. He clearly declared that there was no other way to the Father (vs 6) and his Father’s house (vss 2-3). Peter reiterated this same truth years later to the rulers in Jerusalem, saying about Jesus, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The exclusive nature of the only path to salvation is expressed in the words “I am the way.”

Jesus was clear: there is only one way, and he is it. This belief is not popular in our culture; it is not politically correct. Tolerance is the rule of the day, and diversity mandated, expected and allowed. Now, God does allow us to do anything we like. However, man’s efforts always fall short. That’s why God made a way that bypasses our work and accepts the reconciliatory and substitutional work of Jesus on our behalf. God is reaching out to us in Jesus Christ. We know that Scripture says that God’s gift of salvation through Jesus was GOD-given (John 3:16), GOD-empowered (John 1:12), and GOD-originated (II Timothy 1:9).

God supplied the sacrifice that He Himself demanded by sending His only Son to die for us. Christianity affirms this fact then, that our salvation is a result not of what we do, but of our faith in what Christ has done for us. When Jesus said, “It is finished” love’s redeeming work was DONE! It is important to note that Jesus said “it is finished,” not “I am finished.” Yes our redemption was finished, but he was not. He is still the true and living way, and he was just getting started.

As the true and living way, he is the only way to God (Matthew 7:14; John 10:1,7,9; 14:6). Through him God has made a way to escape (I Corinthians 10:13). Jesus has provided the way into the holiest (Hebrews 9:8-15; 10:19) and the new and living way (Hebrews 10:20). His teaching distinguishes the way of truth (II Peter 2:2), the right way (II Peter 2:15) and the way of righteousness (II Peter 2:21; I Corinthians 1:30).

Affirmations: Jesus is my true and living way. I love the truth.

Conversation Starters: Have you found the way? Do you know the truth/

Recommended Reading: John 13 & 14

John 15:1,5:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Now we come to the final “I am” statement. It occurred during the upper room discourse. Jesus twice makes the declaration that he is “the vine.” On the first occasion, he links himself with the Father, when he says “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman (i.e. the “gardener” or, “vinedresser”) (John 15:1). On the second occasion, he links himself with the believer, when he declares, “I am the vine; ye are the branches.” This gives us a clear image of God working through Jesus to provide for His people.

The Old Testament uses the metaphors of the vine and vinedresser for the people of Israel and God. Among the most well known is Isaiah 5:1-7, which describes Israel as God’s vineyard. It is God’s because He loves it and painstakingly prepared the land and planted it. He protects it and providentially watches over it (Deuteronomy 7:7-11). As any other vinedresser, God does all this with the expectation of an abundant harvest.

In Psalms 80, God describes the exodus with the language of a vineyard; the vine being transplanted from Egypt to the Promised Land (vss 9-11). Other examples of the metaphor are found in Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 10:2; and Ezekiel 17:5-6, 8. In the New Testament, the image of the vineyard is extended to the Kingdom of God (Matthew 20:1-11; 21:33-43).

In John 15:1-5 Jesus identifies himself as the true vine who claims that participation in the kingdom is reserved for those whom remain “in him.” Israel turned out to be a false vine, which produced wild grapes (Isaiah 5:1-7) while Jesus is the true vine, which produces good fruit. It is only by abiding in him that the believer has life and is nourished to enjoy it to the fullest.

By calling himself “the true vine,” Jesus identifies himself with what Israel should have been. Physical ancestry (i.e. being a Jew) no longer guarantees entrance into the kingdom; it is available only to those who abide in Jesus. Without him, we can do nothing of spiritual value for the kingdom of God. Branches cannot live without being associated with the vine. They will wither and die if the connection is severed.

The Bible speaks of different kinds of branches. We read of fruitless branches which will be severed from the vine. There is the withered branch which is not properly attached to the vine or is diseased. These will be gathered up and burned. Then we also have the fruitful branches which are pruned to bear even more fruit.

John 15:1-7:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. ² Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ³ Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ⁶ If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

We ought to abide in the vine close to the water of life and let the vinedresser prune us for an even more abundant harvest. Jesus said, “without me ye can do nothing” and right he was. Paul several years later proudly proclaimed, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Without him, we can do nothing and with him, all things are possible. Note, too what Jesus promised to those who accepted his invitation to abide in him: “Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.” Now those are words of great encouragement.

Affirmations: Jesus allows me to live in him. I bring forth fruit unto righteousness.

Conversation Starters: Do you know the true vine? Do you have someone watching over you?

Recommended Reading: Isaiah 5; John 15 & 16.

Hebrews 13:8:

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

We can certainly admire Jesus' consistency. His character is outstanding and steadfast. Like his Father Who knows no variableness or shadow of turning (James 1:17), Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Saying "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" does not mean that Christ can't respond differently from day to day. The gospel accounts show us Jesus responding with compassion and tenderness at times and in anger at other times. Hebrews 4:15 calls him a "sympathizing High Priest." Since we are exhorted to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15), it is likely that Jesus will do the same. Hebrews 4:15 reminds us that Jesus, the son of God is a faithful high priest who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15). He can and does respond differently to our different circumstances. He is changeless in that those varied responses are rooted in a consistent character of love, wisdom, righteousness and power.

It is crucial that Jesus Christ be the same yesterday as he is today because yesterday is when Jesus Christ showed us in history who he really was. What we have experienced of his compassion and power, we can expect to continue because he doesn't change. Today, we have fellowship with him and relate to him as the person we know by reading about his life and work yesterday. We take comfort in knowing that Jesus Christ will be the same tomorrow, and that affords us hope. He is changeless through the ages. He is consistently the same. He is the anointed one of God who saved us from our sin and gave us access to the kingdom of heaven.

On the Day of the ascension the angel spoke to the men of Galilee and said, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this **same Jesus**, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Similarly on the day of Pentecost Peter boldly announced to all the house of Israel "that God hath made that **same Jesus**, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). Then Paul pointed out in Romans 10:12 that "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the **same Lord** over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

It is important to know that Jesus is the same, but it is equally important to know what he is the same as. When the Jews asked Jesus, "Who art thou?" Jesus answered, "Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning (John 8:25). Not only has Jesus always been the same, he has always declared the same thing about himself. He was who God said he was and boldly declared it. The "I am" statements we covered previously are still true for he is the same.

When people disputed what he said about himself, he resolutely explained why what he said was true (John 5:30). He said, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another [speaking of God] that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth, but I receive not testimony from man. . . I have greater witness than *that* of John. . . for the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me" (John 5:31-37).

Please note that Hebrews 13:8 does not declare that Jesus was alive in eternity past. It said "yesterday" and that is what it means. The Greek *chthes* from which it is translated also means yesterday. It refers to a short duration in the past. However, it does indicate consistency in the past, present and future. It reminds me of II Corinthians 1:10.

II Corinthians 1:10:

Who [God] **delivered** us from so great a death, and **doth deliver**: in whom we trust that he **will yet deliver** us.

Just like our deliverance is past, present and future so is the redeeming work of our anointed Lord and Savior. The son of man we saw walking the dusty roads of the Bible lands fulfilling his purpose is still doing the same today.

Luke 4:18-19:

The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

He will be forever the same, destroying the works the devil (I John 3:8).

Affirmations: Jesus is touched by the feelings of my infirmities. I love the same Jesus the Bible presents.

Conversation Starters: Do you know the same Jesus as Peter? Do you know Jesus doesn't change?

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 4 & 5

I John 2:1:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

“Advocate” is the Greek word *paraklētos* which appears 5 times (what grace) in the New Testament only in John’s writings. It’s used 4 times in John’s gospel (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) referring to the gift of holy spirit and is translated “Comforter.” It also occurs once in his first epistle (I John 2:1 above) referring to Jesus and is translated “advocate.”

Paraklētos literally means “called to one’s side” for aid and was used in court of a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, one who advocates or pleads another’s cause. In its widest sense, it signifies a succorer or helper. In its first occurrence, John 14:16, Jesus promises to send “another” *paraklētos*, thus also referring to Himself as a *paraklētos*.

Jesus is our (the believer’s) *paraklētos*. He is the one who comes to our aid when we sin and uses his own influence on our behalf as he stands by us and pleads our case before God. He intercedes for us before the throne of God, as we confess our sins (I John 1:8-2:2). Jesus provides propitiation (appeasement or conciliation) for our sins (I John 2:2; 4:10) as it is his blood which cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7).

Jesus’ work as our advocate goes beyond that of an earthly defense attorney, for his advocacy for us is grounded in the work he has done to secure God’s favorable verdict. (Romans 8:1–4; we were acquitted and sin was condemned.) For those who are in Christ, God is no longer the Judge Who condemns us but the Father Who adopts us into His family. We are guilty of sin and unable to meet requirements for acquittal, but Jesus Christ the righteous met them for us and it’s the perfect righteousness of Jesus imputed to us in our justification which sets us right with God.

God no longer condemns believers who have accepted Christ’s work on their behalf, for Christ has satisfied his Father’s just demands. He paid the penalty of death for us, sacrificing himself in our stead as our substitute. He is the “propitiation” for us, the one who endured the wrath we deserved so that divine justice is fulfilled, not set aside. Indeed, Jesus is the propitiation for “the whole world.”

Jesus’ work as our Advocate involves our ongoing sanctification as well as our once-for-all justification. When we first confessed the Lord Jesus, his righteousness was imputed to us, justifying us and making us as he is (Romans 5:9; 8:30). Yet even though there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, we continue to sin until we are glorified. Therefore, we need to understand and accept God’s forgiveness which encourages us to walk in the light as He is light. As we repent, Jesus advocates for us to restore our fellowship with God.

The existence of this office implies: that there is an accusation against us (Job 1:6-9; Revelation 12:10); that we are all indicted and summoned for trial. The existence of such an office evinces a compassionate disposition on God’s part towards us since the advocate is provided by God. The essential qualification of an advocate for sinners is that he is not a transgressor himself. He must be righteous before God; else he will himself need an advocate. Therefore we read of our advocate, “Jesus Christ, the righteous.”

If we want the services of an advocate, we must retain them for ourselves. We must engage him and commit our case into his hands. It is absolutely necessary that the advocate has the consent of those for whom he pleads. They must commit their whole case to him. If he sees there are certain things they must do, or certain confessions they must make in order to succeed, they must promptly comply.

As to the fact of sin, there is no dispute. The only question is whether mercy can be given. The question is not at all whether the man is guilty that fact is fully settled and the sinner knows it. There is no lack of real guilt, and the question therefore does not at all need to be asked whether he is guilty nor how much guilt he had incurred. The only question is, “Can mercy be shown and the guilty man be pardoned?”

Our advocate knows that mercy is the Father’s delight, and he assumes that the Father is entirely sincere in calling us to repentance. Yet Christ does not take it for granted that because God loves to pardon, He will do so without his advocacy. He knows that God will show mercy when He can as He does it benevolently, in harmony with what is legally required.

What comfort we have knowing that Jesus Christ, the righteous, pleads our cause, understanding our frame. Our comforter is our encourager, our helper, our succorer. He totally paid the price for us with his shed blood, and we can walk as more than conquerors through him who loved us. Let’s never forget that in the face of accusation we always have an advocate.

Affirmations: Jesus Christ is my advocate, I have been acquitted and my sin forgiven.

Conversation Starters: Do you have an advocate? Who do you go to for help?

Recommended Reading: I John 1 & 2

ALPHA & OMEGA, THE FIRST & THE LAST, THE BEGINNING & THE END - PART I: DAY 28

Revelation 1:17-18:

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

Four times this remarkable title occurs in the Book of Revelation. It is used of God, Jesus and an angel. However, regardless of whom it is used it always means the same thing, “the only one.”

Revelation 1:8: [Here “Alpha and Omega” refers to God.]

I am Alpha and Omega, ~~the beginning and the ending~~ [not in mss], saith the Lord [title used of both God and Jesus], which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. [Title only always used of God as it is in the other seven places it occurs in Revelation.]

Revelation 1:11: [Here “Alpha and Omega” refers to Jesus.]

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. [Verses 17 and 18 clarify that it is Jesus and not God. See verse below.]

Revelation 21:6: [Here “Alpha and Omega” refers to God.]

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. [Verse seven clarifies it.]

Revelation 22:13: [Here “Alpha and Omega” refers to an angel.]

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. [Read Revelation 22:6-21.]

On the one occasion [1:11] this title was used of Jesus, it was announced with a clear and penetrating voice, “a great voice as of a trumpet (v 10)”; and the speaker was “*one* like unto the Son of Man (v 13),” — like him whom John had formerly known, at whose feet he had sat, in whose bosom he had lain — like him, but how changed! Invested now with glory insufferably dazzling, when the Apostle saw him, he fell at his feet as dead (v 17). “I am **ALPHA AND OMEGA**,” said the voice, “the First and the Last.”

This is indeed a very interesting title. “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” Revelation 22:13 also adds “the beginning and the end.” We can understand the connection of all three titles. *Alpha* and *Omega* are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They are also the beginning and the end of it.

These titles were commonly understood in the Bible lands in Bible times. They are orientalisms. In Old Testament times, if a country in the East was about to be attacked, the king would send out messengers to all of the people. The messengers would warn the people of the coming danger. When the messengers came into town, as they were riding along on their horses (sort of like Paul Revere on his midnight ride), they had no time to stop and expound upon the matter with the people. They had only one message and a fleeting moment in which to say it. The king would not have time to send several groups of messengers to a town. Therefore this one messenger was very important because he was the alpha and omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

In the East, when this messenger came riding through the town he would say, “I am the first and the last; take heed; take warning; prepare yourselves for the battle.” The messenger emphasized that “I am the first and the last.” This meant he was the *only* messenger. If you’re the first and the last to do something, then you are the only one; you are the only messenger. This is what this verse in Revelation refers to when it says Jesus Christ is “the first and the last” — the one and only.

Revelation 1:17, 18a:

And when I [John] saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: ¹⁸ I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen. . . .

”I am he that liveth, and was dead.” Jesus Christ is “the first and the last,” who lives and was dead. He not only lives now, but he lives forevermore because God raised him from the dead. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only one God ever raised from the dead. That is why he is “the first and the last.” That’s what sets Christianity apart from every religion that man has ever made, because nobody else but Jesus Christ was ever raised from the dead to the end that he is still alive. It is true that other people have been raised from the dead, but their rising was only temporary. Death was not completely defeated when they were brought back to life. Death still had dominion over them, and they all died again — all except Jesus.

Romans 6:9:

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

In his resurrection, Jesus Christ is as much alive today as he was the day that God raised him from the dead almost 2,000 years ago. It is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ which sets Christianity apart from everything that man has ever thought about doing. It is what makes him so special. It is what God did that really made all the difference in the world.

Affirmations: Jesus Christ is God’s only begotten Son. I serve a risen savior.

Conversation Starters: Who is the alpha and omega? Who is the first and the last?

Recommended Reading: Revelation 1 & 2

ALPHA & OMEGA, THE FIRST & THE LAST, THE BEGINNING & THE END - PART II: DAY 29

Revelation 1:11:

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Through the ages there have been other men who taught some wonderful things, other men who stood for God; but God did not raise any of these others from the dead. The prophets of old time were great men. Even though they stood with God, even though they believed God and spoke His Word, God did not raise any of them from the dead. John the Baptist was the greatest of them all before Jesus Christ, yet God did not raise him from the dead. There's only one God raised — and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. This sets Christianity apart.

When God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, death was defeated. If God could defeat death through raising the Lord Jesus Christ, then you and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt we have eternal life. If God had not done this, we wouldn't have any guarantee. And the guarantee that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and that we have eternal life is that we speak in tongues.

The resurrection is the reason we all became Christians in the first place. It sounded like something better than anything else we had ever heard. Someone said, "Hey, how would you like to have eternal life?" It sounded pretty good. None of us really know what it is all about; we have not "been there" yet. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, then we will know what it is all about. Right now, it is just a promise of God. And it is something that sounded so great and so wonderful to us, we gave up everything we ever had before. We gave ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ so we could have eternal life. Just two words — *eternal life* — made the big difference in our lives.

"Eternal life" has put us in a position we can't get out of. Whether we like it or not, we can't get out of it. We are born of incorruptible seed. Our standing as sons of God cannot be changed. We are going to be gathered together when Christ returns whether we like it or not. You cannot sit around and hold onto your chair and think you are going to stay here, because you're "going up" when he returns. That's what the Word of God says — because God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. He is the first and the last, the only one. Man can worship a lot of other people if he wants to, and that is basically what religion is all about. People end up worshipping some man in any religion they get involved with — it always comes from some man. There isn't a "great elephant" somewhere teaching people doctrine. Although some people worship the cow in Buddhism, there's still Buddha at the head of that religion which man set up and promulgated. There is always some man in any religion who spoke the words that made the doctrine.

We do not worship a man, we worship God. Yet the man who fully declared God by his life is the only begotten Son of God, our lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only one that God has ever raised from the dead. The Devil is not in the business of raising people from the dead. He is in the business of keeping them dead. But God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and because He did, that is our guarantee, our proof that God has complete power over the Devil and over death. There is nothing the Devil can do to stop the power of God and the power of God's Word.

Revelation 2:8:

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.

That repeats what we read in Revelation 1:17 & 18. "Which was dead and is alive" refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. "He is the first and the last." He is the only one God ever raised from the dead, the only messiah, the only savior of the world. Christianity is what God wrought in Christ Jesus — who is "the way, the truth and the life." It is the only answer. It is the only way to live; it is the only way to believe rightly according to the accuracy of God's Word.

God called every believer to be His son. He gave His Word so that we could know what is going on around us. Otherwise, without His Word, man would be completely lost. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead so we could live a more than abundant life today and look forward to eternal life in God's presence. God will never send another savior. Jesus Christ of Nazareth was "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last."

Affirmations: I have eternal life. I worship God in spirit and in truth.

Conversation Starters: Who has God raised from the dead to die no more? What makes Biblical Christianity so unique?

Recommended Reading: Revelation 21 & 22

Hebrews 12:2:

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus is called “Author” in Hebrews 12:2, “Prince” in Acts 3:15 and 5:31 and the “Captain of salvation” in Hebrews 2:10. In each case the Greek word is the same: *archēgos*. Uses of the term in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) and nonbiblical Greek suggest it carries a threefold connotation: (1) path-breaker or pioneer (i.e. one who takes the lead for others and provides an example); (2) the source or founder, hence “author,” “initiator,” “beginner”; and (3) the chief leader or ruler, hence, “captain,” “prince” or “king.”

The ideas may well overlap or be combined. In its fullest sense the Greek word denotes someone who stands at the head and leads, someone who explores new territory, opens a trail and leads others to and through it. The *archēgos* builds a city or fortress for those who follow and leads them in defense against attackers. When the peace has been won, he remains as their ruler and the city or community bears his name. He is thereafter honored as the founding hero.

In Acts 3:15 Peter accuses the Jews of killing the “author (*archēgos*) of life,” suggesting that Jesus is the provider-proctor of life, *zoē*, eternal life that can be more than abundant right now. Later in Acts Peter speaks of Jesus as the “Prince (*archēgos*) and Savior” who gives repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 5:31:

Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

“Prince” and “Saviour” are both titles of dignity and honor given by God to exalt his son. The word “Savior” was associated with the Old Testament Judges. Jesus is the one who meets the emergency situation caused by the sin of God’s people, and he comes to bring not only deliverance but also the continuing service of Author (*archēgos*). The writer to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus as the “captain (*archēgos*) of. . . salvation” (2:10) and the “author (*archēgos*) and finisher of *our* faith” (12:2). In each case Jesus not only initiates and provides the new life for his people but remains with them through it; they bear his name; he is their prince.

Hebrews 2:9-10:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. ¹⁰ For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain (*archēgos*) of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Hebrews 12:1-3:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author (*archēgos*) and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Jesus is the author (the first one) and the finisher (the perfecter) of faith. He is the one who has in his own person raised faith to its perfection and so set before us the highest example of faith. He blazed a trail to the heart of the father for all to follow and has become the way to everlasting life.

There is a title similar to *archēgos* used in Hebrews 6:20. It is “forerunner,” *prodromos*, and it occurs only once in the Bible: “Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 6:20). The word signifies one who comes in advance to a place where the rest are to follow, or one who is sent on before as a scout to take observations. In this sense, Christ is our forerunner, for he has gone into heaven to prepare a place for his people into which he will eventually lead them. The idea of a forerunner is peculiar to the grace administration.

Affirmations: Jesus leads and I follow. I look unto Jesus.

Conversation Starters: Do you have/know a prince? Who is our forerunner?

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 12; Acts 5

Revelation 22:16:

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

The bright and morning star is a reference to the planet Venus, which is so often seen shining brightly in the early morning. The sight of the planet provides a pledge of the coming day, which dispels the darkness and brightens and clears the sight. Jesus is the bright morning star! Bright, in that it illuminates our way, and the morning star, in that it ushers in the light of day.

Our view now constitutes only the beginning of a clearer sight, and it guarantees a glorious day that has no night when we shall see the King in all his beauty. There will even be no need of the sun, “for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

However beautiful and awe-inspiring our perception is now by the light of our bright and morning star, Jesus Christ, we are promised a more complete view. Although he has “shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6), and although Christ appeared as “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Hebrews 1:3), soon we shall see him “face to face” (I Corinthians 13:12) and even “be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2).

What a joyful hour it was when Jesus the **BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR**, first rose on this wretched dark world! Long had the world looked for his coming and waited for his salvation. Truly the world longed for the brightness of His rising, “more than they that watched for the morning” (Psalms 130:6). Its way continues to enlighten him as “his path shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

Yes, Jesus arose on a dark world as the **BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR** to guide our feet into the way of peace. Certainly this provides a reason for praise? The angels sang praises when he arrived, what should we do? The people of Bethlehem responded with wonder to the strange things the shepherds told them. People still *wonder* at what the Bible says. Remember a “star” was prophesied to come (Numbers 24:17).

In reference to his original splendor, Lucifer was called a “morning star,” which may be better translated as “shining star” (Isaiah 14:12). Jesus Christ is referred to in Revelation 22:16 as the “bright morning star,” indicating that he now exceeds Lucifer’s original brilliance because of his virtuous character. By never trying to shine in his own light but being content to reflect the Father’s brilliance, Jesus has now been blessed by God to be a luminary of luminaries, shining alongside God at His Own right hand. God “broke the mold” when He created Lucifer, but Jesus Christ is patterning himself after his Father being the image of the invisible God. What Lucifer sought for and even grabbed at—equality with God—Jesus never even considered for a moment that it could be his. But since Lucifer’s rebellion, God has longed for one to be His companion and share with Him in His many divine functions. Jesus Christ is now such a one, a glorious Lord not in any way competing with the Father but cooperating with Him to his glory (See *One God and One Lord*, p 58).

The morning star heralds the day (II Peter 1:19). It is a symbol of promise: his presence and guidance. And that is what Christ is, the bBright and Morning Star to the soul. Truly, a new day dawned for humankind when Christ was born, and a new day dawns for the individual heart when Christ comes in. How glad we should be that Jesus is never referred to as the “setting sun” or the “shades of night.” Rather, he is the light of the world. He banishes darkness, and as the bright and morning star, he ushers in a new day of hope and light.

Reginald Heber wrote a hymn in the early nineteenth century entitled “Brightest and Best,” and it is sung to the hymn tune MORNING STAR:

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

As sailors of old followed the stars in the sky, we can follow the **BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR** throughout the days of our lives, for he will be an unseen presence on our pilgrimage. Hold fast to him. Look up!

Affirmations: Jesus guides me into the way of peace. I praise God for His goodness.

Conversation Starters: What is the bright and morning star? Did you know Lucifer was called a shining star?

Recommended Reading: Isaiah 14; Psalms 130

Matthew 1:23:

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

In Lesson 2, *WHAT'S IN A NAME*. I mentioned that Jesus only properly had two names: "Jesus" and "Emmanuel." The reason I said that is because they were the only two appellations identified with *onoma*, the Greek word for "name."

However, Jesus was the only one used of him consistently throughout God's Word being used about 972 times. "Emmanuel" occurs only 3 times: Isaiah 7:14; 8:8; and Matthew 1:23.

Its only New Testament occurrence is in Matthew 1:23 the context of which is very intriguing.

Matthew 1:20-25:

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. ²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. ²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

The angel specifically told Joseph in verse 20 to call the baby's name Jesus. Then it refers to the Isaiah 7:14 prophecy which said they shall call his name "Emmanuel." The immediate context closes with the birth and notes that Joseph did indeed call him Jesus. Why bring up the name, "Emmanuel" when the context clearly shows Joseph using the name "Jesus" as instructed? The reason is to link Jesus with Isaiah's prophecy, identifying him as the Messiah spoke of in the Old Testament. Isaiah 7:14 is a prediction of Jesus' divine conception that was documented in Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:31-35. The disparity is dispelled when one recognizes the two different usages of *onoma*. Lesson 9, *ACTING IN SOMEONE'S NAME* notes four usages. The usage of *onoma* in verse 21 and 25 is the first, the use of a proper name, and the usage of the one in verse 23 is the fourth, reputation, referring to everything which the name covers, all the thoughts and feelings aroused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering, the name including Jesus' standing as the only begotten son, his authority, and his exploits. The name he would make of himself would identify him as "Emmanuel," "God with us."

"Emmanuel," may be properly translated "God with us" (as in the KJV, NIV and most other translations) or "God is with us" (as in the CJB, CSB, GWN, MGI, MIT, NAB, NJB, NLT and NRS translations). God was certainly with His people in Jesus Christ for Jesus had said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). The use of the name "Emmanuel" doesn't make Jesus God as some conclude. The significance of the name is symbolic. Yes, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (II Corinthians 5:19). Please note that it says, "God was in Christ" not "God was Christ." Symbolism in names can be seen throughout the Bible. The name "Elijah" means "Jah is God." Samuel means "his name is God." Isaiah means "Jehovah has saved." "Elisha" means "God is salvation."

The truth is that God was always with His people. He stood with them and provided for them throughout the Old Testament. The prophets knew that God was with them, even when He was not with the rest of His people (Isaiah 8:10; Numbers 23:21). It was the awareness of God's presence with His people that allowed them to overcome their fear (Numbers 14:9; Deuteronomy 20:1; Joshua 1:9). God encouraged his people to do exploits by reminding them that He was with them (Judges 6:12; II Samuel 7:3; I Chronicles 17:2; II Chronicles 15:2; Jeremiah 20:11; Zechariah 10:6). People of godly character were reputed to have the Lord with them (I Samuel 16:16; Genesis 21:22; Zechariah 8:23).

However, never in the history of mankind had God been more clearly with his people than when Jesus walked the earth. Jesus fully declared God and made Him known (John 1:14,18). He was the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). He always did his Father's will (John 8:28-29; 5:19,30; 6:38; 12:49-50). Ephesians describing us in our previous undesirable condition calls us "having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). But having God with us assures us of our wellbeing at all times and in all situations. Such was Jesus' reputation that people wondered at his miracle-working power (John 11:37; Matthew 15:31; Mark 6:51; Luke 2:18; 4:22; 8:25; 9:43; 11:14). I still stand in awe of the truth that God has declared that Christ is in me! What a hope of glory! That means God is with me, causing me to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by me in every place (II Corinthians 2:14).

Affirmations: God is with me. God causes me to triumph in Christ.

Conversation Starters: What does Emmanuel mean? What were the two proper names of the Son of God?

Recommended Reading: Isaiah 7; verses in parentheses in the lesson

I Corinthians 15:20-23:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Jesus is called “the firstfruits of them that slept” because he was the first to rise from the dead — **never to die again**. All who have ever arisen from the dead, died subsequently in later years. Jesus could accurately be called “the firstfruits” of the dead because “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him” (Romans 6:9). All others who were raised at any time before Jesus have died again. They are among those who “sleep” and continue to wait for the bodily resurrection from the dead. Only Jesus has truly conquered death. In this sense, Christ is “the firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5; Acts 26:23). Such is the power and impact of *Christ the firstfruits*. It guarantees our victory over death, too. Because Christ conquered death, so will we.

The use of the word “firstfruits,” *aparchē*, in I Corinthians 15:20 & 23 can be understood in how it has been used before in the Old Testament. The firstfruits referred to either the earliest gathered grains, fruits, and vegetables (Numbers 13:20; Ezekiel 44:30) or to the portion that is best (Numbers 15:20; II Chronicles 31:5). In either case they were dedicated to God in recognition of His faithfulness for providing for His people (Exodus 23:18; 34:26). The “firstfruits” were the first to come in time and/or quality, a pledge or hope of the greater harvest to follow and specially dedicated to God. The Israelites were to offer to God a sheaf of the first grain that was harvested on the day after the Sabbath following the Passover feast (Leviticus 23:9-14).

Paul used the term “firstfruits” in this letter to the Corinthian church to document and reinforce the certainty of the resurrection. Just as the term “firstfruits” indicates that “the first sheaf of the forthcoming grain harvest will be followed by the rest of the sheaves, Christ, the firstfruits raised from the dead, is the guarantee for all those who belong to him that they also will share in his resurrection” (Kistemaker, 1993, p. 548). Jesus is God's “firstfruits” of the resurrection. And, like the Israelites, God will gather the rest of the harvest at the final resurrection. Paul established for the Corinthians (by way of this metaphor) that Christ's resurrection is a pledge of our resurrection. It is inevitable — guaranteed by God Himself.

A firstfruits ceremony is described in detail in Deuteronomy 26:1-11. Note that the “first born,” whether human or beast, was also considered as God's special possession and can be considered a type of first fruit (Exodus 22:29; Exodus 34:19). Proverbs 3:9 instructs us to “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.” Romans 8:23 also speaks of the gift of holy spirit as the firstfruits as we await the redemption of our bodies. Paul also speaks of the first converts in an area as the firstfruits as they are often distinguished as being first in time and quality.

Part of the practical benefit of understanding Christ the firstfruits is the assurance it gives us. In I Corinthians 15, Paul wrote at length concerning the resurrection of the dead. There were some in Corinth who taught “that there is no resurrection of the dead” (15:12). As one of his proofs for the Christian's eventual resurrection, Paul pointed to the fact of the resurrection of Christ and showed that one without the other was not possible, saying, “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised, and if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. (15:16-17)! However Christ has risen, and thus made the resurrection of the dead inevitable for all.

Affirmations: I give my first fruits to the Lord. I have conquered death through Jesus Christ.

Conversation Starters: Do you know what firstfruits are? Why do we think we will be resurrected?

Recommended Reading: Deuteronomy 26; Leviticus 23

Proverbs 18:24:

A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother.

Although the translation of the first part of Proverbs 18:24 is disputed, there is much agreement on the second part which is where I really want to go with this lesson. Before we go there, however, let's address the first part: "A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly." We know this principle is true, even though it is an inexact translation. Many proverbs and other examples in the Bible teach us the importance of friendship and being loyal friends (Proverbs 17:17; 27:10; Ruth 1:16). "The Golden Rule" also makes the point that "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). These things, and common sense, verify the importance of being friendly if you want to have friends.

More recent translations render the first part of verse 18 differently. "He that maketh many friends *doeth it* to his own destruction" (ASV). "A man with many friends may be harmed" (CSB). "Friends can destroy one another" (GWN). Bullinger in a note in his *Companion Bible* offers the following translation: "There are friends that rend us, but there is a lover who is closer than a brother." Also *Nelson's NKJV Study Bible*, suggests: "Sometimes even friends destroy each other, but there is a Friend who loves more faithfully than a brother." Nearly every translation emphasizes the plurality of friends, making the point that even someone with an abundance friends may still have problems. A large number of friends does not guarantee help in the time of need.

That being said, let's move on to the second part of the verse on which there is much more agreement. The friend referred to in the second part of the verse is an allusion to our Lord Jesus Christ. He indeed is the friend who "loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17) providing "heartly counsel" and never forsaking us (Proverbs 27:9-10). This indirect prophetic reference points to the one who described himself as friend (John 15:14-15) and was described by others as "a friend of publicans and sinners" (Luke 7:34).

We show ourselves to be his friend when we do as he commands (John 15:14). Our ready obedience allows us to own and develop our friendship. Deuteronomy 13:6 describes a friend as one "which is as thine own soul." Such was the friendship of Jonathan and David who were of one heart and soul. We also see it in the Book of Acts where the believers moved as one (Acts 2:41-47). So our friendship with Christ should be expressive of the close union we have with him. For truly he adheres to our cause and interests, being constant and continuing as a friend at all times.

The nine uses of "friend" in Proverbs show that there are two kinds of "friends": One is the friend who exists because you have something to offer such as a material gift or some other benefit of association, the other friend exists due to genuine love and is like an extension of your own soul. Proverbs 18:24 offers a contrast between the two. We can amass as many friends of the first type as we want but still come to ruin; however, even one friend of the second type is a great advantage.

The genuine or authentic friend can be counted on. He or she is steadfast, trustworthy and will be there for us even more so than a family member. There are things in his friendship which render us sure of not being deceived, therefore we unreservedly put our confidence in him. So great and fathomless is his love that we are truly sure that there cannot, by any possibility, arise any cause which could make Christ love us less.

Is it not written of Judas in Psalm 41:9: "Even my close friend (speaking of Judas), whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Yet in Matthew 26:50 when Judas acts as guide to them that took Jesus, Jesus greets Judas saying, "Friend, do what you came to do" (ESV). Jesus remained the consummate friend. Right to the end, Jesus held out the possibility of friendship between himself and his betrayer, but Judas rejected the opportunity. Everyone one of us has the opportunity to receive or reject his friendship. What will we chose?

Do we want a friend who'll never let us down, never disappoint, fail or give up on us? Do we want a friend who'll never tire of us? Jesus Christ wants to be the dearest friend we could ever have, and he has the wisdom and ability to see us through the most difficult situations.

Oh the wonder of the intimacy to which he invites us. In Eastern culture a host would not normally eat with a guest. He would prepare and serve the guest food but would only eat with them if they were family or the most intimate of friends. Because so much of the food was prepared and preserved with salt, eating salted food together involved entering into a salt covenant. That is why Revelation 3:20 uses eating together to show the intimacy of the relationship that the Lord wants to have with us. He wants to be part of our lives in a most intimate way.

Revelation 3:20:

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The salt covenant dates back to antiquity and was a most solemn and binding agreement. One would never break a salt covenant. The consequences for doing so was death. With this understanding, one can see why Judas, refusing to accept Jesus' offer to tarry in Jerusalem and be endued with power from on high under a salt covenant, would go out and kill himself.

Indeed in Acts 1:4 Jesus took salt with all the apostles. He guaranteed and bound his friendship with them with a covenant of salt which he will never break. He has extended the same invitation to us; let's not let it slip away. He has promised, "I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Let's enjoy his friendship.

Affirmations: I have found a friend in Jesus. Jesus Christ is always there for me.

Conversation Starters: Is Jesus your friend? Has Jesus come to sup with you?

Recommended Reading: Proverbs 27; Revelation 3

Colossians 1:13-15:

Who [The Father] hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: ¹⁵ Who is the image [*eikon*] of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

The word “image,” *eikon*, means “likeness; form or appearance.” It always assumes a prototype, that which it not merely resembles but from which it is drawn (Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*). It is not simply two things which share a likeness, but one thing which proceeds from or reveals the nature or essence of the other. The use of this phrase helps us to understand a part of Jesus’ mission; that is, to reveal to us what God is like.

Too many people have such a warped idea of what God is like. They think God causes all their problems. Their picture of God is of a mean and vengeful authority sitting up in heaven with a big club waiting for them to make a mistake so He can whack them on the head. They see a God Who wants to make them sick, keep them poor or kill their family.

However, to really know what God is like, we must look at Jesus. Seeing Jesus gives us an accurate picture of God. In Colossians 1:15, Jesus is called “the image of the invisible God.” Jesus himself said, “If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father” (John 14:9). Following Jesus’ earthly ministry allows us to see God’s will in action. Jesus always did his Father’s will (John 5:30; 8:29). You see, everything Jesus did (or didn’t do) made known God and represented God’s will. Jesus demonstrated God’s will to mankind and fully declared Who He was (John 1:18).

John 14:8-10:

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. ⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Have I been a long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? ¹⁰ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Philip’s burning desire was for Jesus to show him the Father. Before Jesus walked on this earth, the world didn’t understand God. They didn’t fathom His great love for them. They didn’t approach or understand Him as a Father. Then Jesus came along manifesting God’s love, doing God’s will and declaring that God was not only his Father but our Father, too. He showed the world how the Father cared and how He acts, because he only did that which he saw his Father do (John 5:19).

Jesus is the visible manifestation of God, Who is invisible and fathomless.

Hebrews 1:3:

Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image [*charaktēr*] of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

In this verse “image” is translated from the Greek word *charaktēr*. This word means “a tool for [en]graving... ‘a stamp’ or ‘impress,’ as on a coin or seal, in which case the seal or die which makes an impression bears the ‘image’ produced by it, and, vice versa, all the features of the ‘image’ correspond respectively with those of the instrument producing it” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, “Image”). Jesus made an impression on the world. That express image shines with the brightness of God’s glory.

II Corinthians 4:4:

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image [*eikōn*] of God, should shine unto them.

He was more than just a “likeness,” which can be incidental and superficial. Jesus is the exact and perfect representation and revelation of God. Through him we can know God. What a wonderful service Jesus Christ performed for us in that he declared God. The glorious gospel of Christ continues to shine illuminating the heart of our Father God. Let’s get a clear image of Who our Father is by beholding His son.

Affirmations: Jesus is the image of the invisible God. The glorious gospel of Christ shines unto me.

Conversation Starters: Who do you know that’s glorious? How can anyone know God?

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 1; II Corinthians 4

John 1:29,36:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh [on himself to bear] away the sin of the world. . . . ³⁶ And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

John the Baptist preached a message of repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins. Thousands of people came to him to be baptized. One day Jesus came to him and when he did John recognized him as the one for whom he had been sent to prepare a way.

John 1:29:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh [on himself to bear] away the sin of the world.

Just like when the angel spoke to Joseph about the naming of Jesus in Matthew 1:21, John recognizes Jesus' mission to eliminate the sin problem. Again the next day John repeated this saying, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36). "Lamb," the Greek noun *amnos*, refers to a young sheep up to one year old. "Of God" can mean either "sent from God" or perhaps "owned by God." John says that Jesus is in some way like a lamb sent or provided by God Himself.

"Sin" is the common Greek noun *harmartia*. Originally it meant "to miss the mark" or "be mistaken." In the New Testament it occurs 173 times as a comprehensive expression of everything opposed to God. "Of the world" is put by metonymy for the people in the world, and it refers here to "humanity in general." "Take away" describes what the Lamb would do with sin, employing the Greek verb *airō*, which means generally "to lift up and move from one place to another." Here it means "to take away, remove or blot out."

John the Baptist is alluding to the Passover Lamb. I Corinthians 5:7 explicitly says that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." Jesus is the Lamb of God in a sacrificial sense. The shedding of blood was necessary for the atonement of sin.

Leviticus 17:11:

For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

Hebrews 9:22 echoes this truth saying, "without shedding of blood is no remission." Animal sacrifice was prescribed in the Old Testament, and the shedding of their blood did atone for sin.

Hebrews 9:13-14:

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ¹⁴ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

However, Hebrews 10:4 tells us that "*it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The reason the Old Testament sacrifices worked was because they were symbolic of the sacrifice Jesus would make. God provided a lamb for His people in the person of His only begotten son. His blood brought in the new covenant (Hebrews 10:29, 12:24; 13:20).

The metaphor of the sacrificial Lamb fits Jesus accurately. The Book of Revelation contains 27 uses of "Lamb" to refer to Jesus (5:6, 8; 6:16; 7:9-10, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22-23, 27).

"Propitiation" in the KJV and the ESV is translated "atoning sacrifice" in the NIV and the NRSV. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah prophesies of the coming one who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

I John 2:1b-2: [NIV]

If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Peter capsulizes this truth when he says:

I Peter 1:18-19:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Christ is likened to a lamb because lambs are meek and gentle and he bore suffering with patience for the shedding of his blood was the sacrifice for our sin.

Affirmations: Jesus, the Lamb of God, was sacrificed for me. Jesus blood cleansed my sin.

Conversation Starters: Who was the Lamb of God? Why is Christ called "our Passover?"

Recommended Reading: Hebrews 9; I Peter 1

Romans 5:12-14:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

There are many people in the Old Testament who could be called "types of Christ." Boaz was a type of Christ our kinsman redeemer. Joseph was a type of Christ as someone who functioned in a position of authority. Joseph's authority to reign under Pharaoh represents how Jesus was authorized to reign under God his Father. Aaron, David, Joshua, Melchizedek, Moses and Solomon are also considered by many to be types of Christ. However Romans 5:14 is the only place in the New Testament that directly points back to a particular person who would set the pattern for who the Messiah would be like. In this pattern we see two men, two acts and two universal results. Adam was a "...pattern of the one to come," in that both Adam and Jesus Christ were men who by one act had a universal effect on mankind. Scripture compares and contrasts Jesus and Adam in two very key places: Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:21-58.

This first Adam was a threefold being of body, soul and spirit, perfect in every aspect, physically, mentally and spiritually. In Luke 3:38 he is referred to as "the son of God," for God's Spirit was upon him. Adam could commune with God without fear or condemnation for there was no sin or death on the earth until Adam was tempted, disobeyed God and fell from his glorious position as lord of the earth. Thus, Adam forfeited his dominion on the earth and his relationship with God was changed drastically. Because of this, sin and death entered the world and became the inheritance of every man for "in Adam all die" (I Corinthians 15:22).

It was Adam's disobedience that introduced "sin" into God's perfect creation. Thus, a state of corruption was imposed upon God's perfect Creation, which would require a process of redemption. This entrance of sin ushered in death (Romans 5:12-21). Adam and Eve disobeyed God, which was an individual act of "sin." This one unrighteous act catalyzed a transformation of Creation from a state of perfection and righteousness to a state of "sin." This made all their descendants subject to death. After that, the only kind of children they could produce were children "...separated from the life of God..." (Ephesians 4:18) and destined to die.

God's solution was another Adam! Like the first Adam, the last Adam would have to be, first of all, genetically flawless and without a sin nature. It was God's responsibility to create him that way, which He did via the virgin birth. But more than that, the last Adam had to live without sin. God could not be responsible for that. He could only hope that, in contrast to the first Adam, the last Adam would be obedient throughout his life and thus accomplish the redemption of mankind. God took a risk and trusted that the last Adam would trust Him.

Jesus Christ, the Last Adam, was a "lamb from out of the flock." Like us, he was a man, but unlike us he was "without spot or blemish." That qualified him as an acceptable sacrifice. The last Adam is the solution to the problem of sin and death that the first Adam introduced. Because the last Adam also had to be a man, he had to start as a seed and be born of a woman (Gen. 3:15). In order to have the potential to become the redeemer of mankind, he had to start with a sinless nature like the first Adam. God put a perfect human seed into the womb of a virgin named Mary, which resulted in a child with the same flawlessness genetics as the first Adam (Luke 1:30-35).

Scripture makes it plain that the Redeemer had to be a man so that he could die for the sins of all mankind (Hebrews 2:9,14; Romans 5:17). Justice required that a representative of the race of those who sinned be the one to die to atone for that sin. This is the irrefutable logic of Romans 5:12-17. Christ's death paid for sin. Christ is called a "sacrifice" (Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:26), a "sin offering" (Isaiah 53:10), a "ransom" (Matthew 20:28; I Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 9:15) and an "atoning sacrifice" (Romans 3:25; I John 2:2; 4:10).

Jesus Christ's original genetic purity, coupled with his sinless life, made him the perfect sacrifice for both the sin nature all men inherited from the first Adam and the corresponding sinful behavior of all men who would ever live. Because of His son's substitutionary sacrifice, God then had the legal right to extend grace to mankind. Jesus Christ became the perfect sacrifice and died for, or in place of, all men. Thus, those who appropriate unto themselves the benefits of this sacrifice by faith in Christ's atoning death exchange their inherent guilt for his righteousness. Hallelujah!

Affirmations: My Redeemer is the man, Christ Jesus. God made Jesus genetically flawless.

Conversation Starters: Who was the "Last Adam?" Who in the Old Testament was a type of Christ?

Recommended Reading: Romans 5; Hebrews 2

I Corinthians 15:45:

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

We saw from Romans 5 that Adam was “a type of the one who was to come,” that is Jesus. Through Adam, sin and death entered the world; through Jesus, grace and life. In the same way that Adam as the prototype man sinned and brought down his descendants after him, so “the one man, Jesus Christ” is the bringer of life to all who are “in him.”

When Paul teaches on the resurrection in I Corinthians 15, he develops this same analogy, using four clear comparisons of Adam and Christ. We encounter the First Adam and the Last Adam, a living soul and a life-giving spirit, the first man which is natural and earthy and the second man which is spiritual and the Lord from heaven.

I Corinthians 15:45-49:

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. ⁴⁶ Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Not only did the Last Adam have to be able to die; he had to be able to sin as well. His behavioral perfection was ultimately dependent solely upon him. He had the choice of whether or not to obey God, and therefore he was temptable. If Jesus had not been able to sin like the First Adam, his temptations would have been inauthentic.

I Corinthians 15:21,22:

For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

God had to fix both problems, sin and death. He needed another Adam. The way in which the Last Adam would solve the problem would be opposite of how the First Adam caused it. The First Adam disobeyed; the Last Adam was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. The First Adam's disobedience brought death; the Last Adam's obedience unto death brought life by his resurrection.

Since the ultimate problem that mankind faced was death, the Last Adam had to defeat this enemy. The only way to do so was by dying. Then God could then raise him from the dead, conquering death and giving him everlasting life.

Romans 6:9 and 10

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. ¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Hebrews 2:9 and 14:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels[being made a man of flesh and blood who could die] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. . . ¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children [of Adam] 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;

The entire Bible from Genesis 3:15 to Revelation 22:21 points to the one who would be God's agent for bringing this about — Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ saw in the Old Testament Scriptures that if he would be obedient unto death, God would raise him from the dead and give him the power to produce a new race for a new age, an age in which he would rule on earth with God. Jesus Christ defeated our ultimate enemy, death, and he has guaranteed the same victory to all who believe on him.

I Corinthians 15:24-28:

Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. ²⁷ For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. ²⁸ And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

This magnificent passage attributes the glory for the entire plan of redemption to its original architect, God. Jesus had to be whatever Adam was before his fall. Jesus Christ is the Last Adam, a man like Adam who could undo what Adam did. The Last Adam, by dying on the Cross, sacrificed himself as an offering for the sin that the First Adam introduced into the world.

Now the same dominion and power that was once the first Adam's has been reclaimed in Christ, the last Adam. Believers in Christ today also have this dominion as joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17), for it is written, “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (John 4:4).

Affirmations: I will reign with Jesus. Death has no dominion over me.

Conversation Starters: How does God vanquish sin and death? Is there life after death?

Recommended Reading: I Corinthians 15

John 13:13-15:

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. ¹⁴ If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

"Rabbi," "master," and "teacher" are used synonymously in the New Testament. "Rabbi" is a transliteration from the Greek and means "my great one" or "my honourable sir." It was a title used in addressing their teachers (and also to honor them when not addressing them directly). It is used 17 times in the New Testament and is translated "master" 9 times and "rabbi" 8 times. All but three of them are used of Jesus. There is another word always translated "master," *kathēgētēs* which is used 3 times. It refers to a guide, master, leader or teacher. Jesus refers to himself as the *kathēgētēs* of his disciples in Matthew 23:10. Matthew 23:8 shows how *rabbi* and *kathēgētēs* are used synonymously,

Matthew 23:8:

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master [*kathēgētēs*], *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

"Teacher" is *didaskalos*. *Didaskalos* is used 58 times in the New Testament and is translated "master" (47 times), teacher (10 times) and "doctor" once. When used of Jesus it is translated "master" 40 times. "Teacher" is more of a descriptive or functional title. It is derived from the verb *didaskō*, "to teach," and is used many times as a form of address in the Gospels. John 1:38b and 3:2 shows how *rabbi* and *didaskalos* are used synonymously.

John 1:38b:

They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master [*didaskalos*],) where dwellest thou?

John 3:2:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher [*didaskalos*] come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus is widely seen as a teacher and even given the respected title of "rabbi," even by some of Jerusalem's elite, such as Nicodemus – a member of the ruling Jerusalem Sanhedrin and considered a "teacher of Israel" in his own right (John 3:10).

"Rabbi" isn't really a word for the clergy of Jesus' time. *Rhabbi* (literally from the Hebrew meaning "my great one" was used as a form of address much like "lord" or "master." In Jesus' day it was particularly used as an honorary title for outstanding teachers of the law. Jesus castigates the scribes and Pharisees for desiring to be called by such an exalted title: "They love. . . being called rabbi by others" (Matthew 23:5-7). This title was extended to John the Baptist (John 3:26), but is mainly used in the New Testament to refer to Jesus. Twice Jesus is called "Rabboni," an alternate form of Rabbi, translated "my lord" or "my master" (Mark 10:51; John 20:16).

"Master" is commonly used by the KJV to translate *rhabbi*, *didaskalos* and *kathēgētēs*. This is more a British usage than American English. In the British educational system, scholars are sometimes referred to as "master" (for example, "headmaster" or "master of arts"). Only rarely do modern translations use "master" in a teaching context (Matthew 23:8, NIV). Rather, they reserve the term "master" as a translation for *kurios*, "lord" or "owner" and use it in a master-servant relationship. Seven times in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is called *epistatēs*, always translated "master," which is used of all sorts or superintendents or overseers (Luke 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:13).

All these words were used synonymously in the Gospels to reflect the kind of teaching conducted by a rabbi with his students or disciples. In Jesus' day a rabbi would gather disciples or students around him. They would accompany him wherever he went, listening to him, following his teaching, imitating him and helping him with his work.

We see this arrangement in the Gospels. Jesus said, "A disciple is not above his teacher.... It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher. . . ." (Matthew 10:24-25, ESV). The word "disciple" (*mathētēs*) means literally, "learner or pupil." In the Gospels, it usually refers to "one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views, disciples or adherents." It is not by accident that Jesus carefully chose 12 men to train to be apostles or "sent ones." Many people followed him, but these twelve were appointed "that they might *be with him*" (Mark 3:14). Jesus and his band of twelve, of course, were joined by other close associates, some of whom provided for his mission financially (Luke 8:1-3). But when Jesus moved, he travelled with an entourage that included these twelve.

Near the close of his time with the twelve, Jesus makes the statement recorded in the verses of the day at the top of the lesson. The twelve were with him to learn, and he made a specific application of his teaching for them. Should we not also follow his example as we do our utmost to be like him and walk in his steps.

Affirmations: Jesus is my master and lord. I follow Jesus' example of serving.

Conversation Starters: Who washed the disciples feet? Why did Peter object to having his feet washed?

Recommended Reading: John 3 & 13; Matthew 10

Job 19:25-27:

For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: ²⁶ And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

There are two notable prophecies in the Old Testament that refer to Jesus as redeemer. The one above describes how Job looked forward to the coming of his redeemer who would raise him from the dead. The redeemer who would stand upon the earth is Jesus. Isaiah also foresaw Jesus' coming and spoke of it.

Isaiah 59:20:

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

"Redeemer" in the Old Testament is a participle of the verb *gā'al*, meaning "redeem, ransom, do the part of a kinsman." A kinsman had the responsibility to help his relatives who were in any difficulty or danger. If a close relative lost his property to a debtor, it was the responsibility of a kinsmen to redeem it. If a relative was murdered, his kinsmen were responsible to avenge his death. If a relative was in prison or in slavery, a kinsman was obligated to pay whatever was necessary to get him released.

We find two excellent examples of this in Abraham and Boaz. When Abraham's nephew, Lot, is taken prisoner in Genesis 14, Abraham rescues him. Later when Lot was threatened by the destruction of Sodom in Genesis 18-19, Abraham intercedes for him, taking personal responsibility to protect his kinsman.

Probably the most endearing story in the Bible that illustrates this is the relationship between Ruth, Naomi and Boaz (Ruth 1-4). Naomi and her husband travel to Moab during a famine. While in Moab, Naomi's husband and both of her sons die. Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, return as poverty-stricken widows to Naomi's home in Bethlehem. Ruth is reduced to gleaning behind the harvesters, picking up whatever stray wheat stalks are left.

"It just happens" that she is gleaning in the field of Boaz, a relative of Naomi's husband. In various translations he is called "kinsman-redeemer" (NIV), "near kinsman" (KJV), or "next-of-kin" (NRSV). Boaz loves Ruth and takes on this role of kinsman-redeemer, not only purchasing back Naomi's dead husband's property but also marrying Ruth to bear children to continue in his dead kinsman's line, a custom sometimes referred to as levirate marriage.

In the New Testament, Jesus is our ransom and redeemer who redeems us from the power of sin. Like the archetype Boaz, Jesus becomes our kinsman-redeemer. He is one of us and willingly paid the ransom necessary to purchase our freedom.

Mark 10:43b-45:

But whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: ⁴⁴ And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom [*lutron*] for many.

I Timothy 2:5-6:

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom [*antilutron*] for all..."

A ransom (*lutron*) is the "price of release" especially the ransom money for the manumission of slaves. Very similar is the rare word *antilotron*, "ransom." God redeems us with His own Son as the ransom price. Jesus is one of us; he becomes our kinsman, our brother. With the shedding of his blood, he redeems us (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12) He buys back his kin who have fallen so far into debt that they cannot ever possibly redeem themselves.

In most English translations, the actual title Redeemer occurs only in the Old Testament, but the concept of Jesus as our Redeemer appears throughout the New Testament. For example, the men on the road to Emmaus tell their companion, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. . ." (Luke 24:21a). Paul also tells the Galatians that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. . ." (Galatians 3:13; 4:5). He also explained to Titus that Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). "Redeemer" calls to mind the technical terms of money paid to free someone, especially one who pays a ransom price. How wonderful that Jesus is both our redeemer and the ransom paid for us.

Affirmations: Jesus is my kinsman redeemer. Jesus is both my redeemer and the ransom paid for me.

Conversation Starters: Are you familiar with the concept of a kinsman redeemer? Of whom was Boaz a type?

Recommended Reading: Ruth

II Timothy 4:8:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

One of the most outstanding and highlighted characteristics of Jesus was his righteousness. He is described as the Righteous One (I John 2:1, NIV), the Righteous Branch (Jeremiah 23:5), the Righteous Judge (II Timothy 4:8), the Righteous Servant (Isaiah 53:11) and the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2). It was his righteousness that qualified him to be the lamb without spot and the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Jesus is affirmed as righteous at his trial before Pilate as Pilate found no fault in him (John 19:6). Pilate's wife also besought her husband to have nothing to do with that righteous man.

Matthew 27:19:

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just [*dikaïos*, righteous] man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

At the crucifixion the centurion also responded to what he saw declaring, "Certainly this was a righteous man." Both Pilate's wife and the centurion used "righteous" in the sense of guiltless or innocent of charges. However, following Christ's resurrection, Jesus' followers also called him the same. He was blameless and guiltless.

In Acts 7:52, just before Stephen was stoned, he proclaimed Jesus as "the Just One" (translated the Righteous One in the ASV, NIV, NRSV and ESV). In Acts 22:14 Ananias explained to the newly converted Paul that "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth." (This was also translated the Righteous One in the ASV, NIV, NRSV and ESV.) After Peter and John healed the crippled beggar at the temple in Acts 3:14, Peter proclaimed to the assembled crowds that they "denied the Holy One and the Just [One], and desired a murderer to be granted unto" them.

Jesus was the Righteous One. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (I Peter 2:22; quoting Isaiah 53:9). He alone is worthy to die for the sins of all mankind (Revelation 5:12). Isaiah prophesied that "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11). The Righteous One substitutes himself on our behalf. He is the righteous sacrifice who takes our place to atone for our sins. He bears our sins in his own body on the tree.

I Peter 2:24:

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

I Peter 3:18:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Malachi 4:2 describes Jesus as the Sun of Righteousness who shall "arise with healing in his wings."

There is another theme in messianic prophecy that points to the righteousness and justice of the Messiah. He was called the *tsemach*, the shoot or offspring of David.

Jeremiah 23:5:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Jeremiah 33:15:

In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

Because Jesus is the Righteous One, he alone is fit to be our Judge. Indeed, Paul calls Jesus, "the Lord, the righteous Judge" (II Timothy 4:8). Jesus is righteous in judicial terms; it is he who justifies us, that is, declares us righteous. He thus calls us to be righteous in our dealings and live with honesty, truthfulness and fairness

Affirmations: Jesus is my righteous judge. Jesus took my sin and made me righteous.

Conversation Starters: Do you know anyone who is righteous? Are you righteous?

Recommended Reading: I Peter 3 & 4

Luke 2:11:

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

The title “Savior,” *sōtēr*, means deliverer or preserver being used of one who rescues from danger and restores to a former state of safety and wellbeing. *Sōtēr* is used 24 times in the New Testament, eight times of God and 16 times of Jesus. It is applied to God in Luke 1:47; I Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10, 13; 3:4; and Jude 25. In the KJV when Savior is used of God, it occurs with a personal pronoun every time but once. In its first occurrence Mary speaks of “God my Saviour.” Every other time except I Timothy 4:10, it reads “God our Saviour.” I Timothy 4:10 reads “the living God, who is the Saviour of all men.” That’s shows us that what our Savior God does for us is personal and intimate.

There is one verse that does cause some difficulty, Titus 2:13.

Titus 2:13: [KJV]

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Titus 2:13: [NASB]

Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ;

The difference between the translations is immediately apparent. In one (those like the KJV), we await the “glorious appearing” of God and in the other (those like the NASB) we await the “appearing of the glory” of God our Saviour. We are looking for the glory of God, which is stated clearly as being “Jesus Christ.” Of course, the glory will come at the appearing, but Scripture says clearly that both the glory of the son and the glory of the Father will appear (Luke 9:26). God’s Word also teaches that when Christ comes, he will come with his Father’s glory (Matthew 16:27). The glory of God we await is Jesus Christ who is returning.

It is used of Jesus in the following 16verses: Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 3:20; II Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:4; 3:6; II Peter 1:1,11; 2:20; 3:2,18; I John 4:14. In addition to Luke 2:11 above, Savior is used by itself of Jesus in the following two verses.

Philippians 3:20:

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 5:23:

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Besides being used by itself, the title Savior occurs in a number of combinations:

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:11; 2:20; 3:18; cf. 3:2).

The Savior Jesus (Acts 13:23).

Jesus Christ Our Savior (Titus 1:4; 3:6; 2 Timothy 1:10).

The Savior of the World (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14).

Prince and Savior (NIV, KJV, Acts 5:31),

Leader and Savior (NRSV, ESV)

Our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1)

Although Savior is used of both God and Jesus, they are saviors in different aspects. God is the author of salvation and Jesus is the agent. God designed the plan and Jesus brought it to pass. Jesus is the one through whom God’s plan of salvation was realized. He is the savior of the world (John 3:17; 4:42; 12:47; 1 John 4:14). He saves to the uttermost those who come unto God by him (Hebrews 7:25). May we, like Paul, be well aware of the sacrifice he made for each of us and let his words echo in our hearts: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (I Timothy 1:15). We have so much to be thankful for.

Affirmations: Jesus has saved me from sin and death. I await he who comes in the glory of God.

Conversation Starters: Has anyone ever saved you? How did the shepherds describe Jesus the day he was born?

Recommended Reading: Titus 1 & 2

Luke 1:35:

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

The term, “son of God,” occurs 48 times in the KJV. All of them are found in the New Testament, except the one in Daniel 3:25 (the use of which refers to an angel, Daniel 3:28; see also Job 1:6; 2:1). Jesus is God’s Son in that he was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. God placed seed in her from which she conceived. This was explained to Mary in Luke 1:35 (above) before it ever happened. It’s the seed of the father that produces a son, and Jesus Christ is identified as “the Son of God” frequently in the Bible both by God in the narrative (Mark 1:1) and by others who recognized the truth from what he did (Matthew 14:33; 27:54) or how God revealed it to them (Matthew 16:16 & 17).

“Son of God” occurs 10 times in the Gospel of John which is the most of any book. John declared the purpose of the writing of his gospel was so that “we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” The term refers to the majesty, position, and power of Jesus. The Greek word for son is *huios*, which emphasizes one’s legal standing. A “*huios*” is a son old enough and mature enough to take on adult family privileges and responsibilities. All Christians are dear children (*teknon*) of God, but those who are led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14) are mature enough to be called “sons” (*huios*, legal heirs; Galatians 4:7) and to have more privileges and responsibilities. Jesus demonstrated this from the very beginning of his ministry (Luke 4:1). It is like coming of legal age.

“Son of God” was a much more cogent and powerful term in the biblical culture than it is in our modern culture. In the “patron and client” culture of the Bible, the son of a powerful person had power and authority simply by virtue of who he was. However, as any honorable and devout child, Jesus did not abuse or take undue advantage of his position but obeyed his Father and did what God asked of him, even though it meant terrible suffering and even his death. “Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). Having been obedient even unto death, His Father recognized his maturity, raised him to His own right hand (Ephesians 1:20) and gave him “all authority in heaven and on earth...” (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus Christ lived his life in such a way that God saw fit to make him the very foundation of the Church, the body of Christ today. The relationship that God had with His beloved son is held forth as the standard for every Father/son relationship.

Ephesians 1:3:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

The relationship God had with Jesus is available to each of us today. Indeed we have Christ in us the hope of glory so we can walk as he did (I John 2:6). As “sons of God” via the new birth, we should learn from his example. It is one thing to be happy to have the privileges of being born into the family of God enjoying our righteousness which was imputed by faith and our authority to use the name of Jesus Christ. However, it is another thing to have those family privileges established and flourishing in a life of obedience and sacrifice. Jesus showed us how to walk as children of God. We need to honestly evaluate our lives, and if we are not serving as we should, make the necessary changes to “live a life worthy” of our family name (Ephesians 3:15; 4:1). If we serve and sacrifice here and now, we will reign with Jesus in the future (II Timothy 2:12).

During his trial before the Jewish leaders, the High Priest demanded that Jesus tell him if he were the Christ, the son of God (Matthew 26:63). When Jesus replied, however, he referred to himself and his dominion as the “son of man” instead of his legal standing as the “son of God” (Matthew 26:64). The Jewish leaders responded by accusing Jesus of blasphemy (Matthew 26:65-66) and besought Pilate to put him to death because he claimed to be the Son of God” (John 19:7). Such a claim hardly goes unnoticed. Have you made such a claim?

Affirmations: By Jesus’ finished work I am a son of God. I can know and serve my Father like Jesus did.

Conversation Starters: Why was Jesus called the son of God?

Recommended Reading: Ephesians 2; Matthew 26

Matthew 16:13:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

The phrase “son of man” is used 108 times in the Old Testament. It comes from the Hebrew “*ben adam*” and refers to mankind, the sons of Adam. It occurs 15 times outside of Ezekiel. It is frequent juxtaposed with “man” when referring emphatically to mankind or human beings in general.

Numbers 23:19:

God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

The same juxtaposition is found in Job 25:6; Psalms 8:4; 80:17; 144:3; Isaiah 51:12; 56:2; Jeremiah 49:18,33; 50:40; and 51:43. Outside of Ezekiel, it is used only in Daniel in the form of a title or designation for someone in particular.

In the 93 times it occurs in Ezekiel, it occurs without the article, denoting a natural descendant of Adam. The frequent and emphatic use in Ezekiel was a constant reminder that in spite of the revelations and visions of Word of the Lord he received, he was still just another member of the human race. It also used to contrast Ezekiel with the celestial living creatures in his book. Scripturally, a “son of man” is not a grandiose title given by God to any certain person. The term simply served to make a clear distinction between God and His creation. “Son of man” is not a special messenger or man of the hour. Anyone boasting in such a title (son of man) is boasting in a thing of naught.

The phrase “son of man” occurs 88 times in the KJV New Testament: 84 of them are in the gospels, and all but two were spoken of Jesus, by Jesus. “Son of Man” was the most frequently used title to refer to Jesus in the New Testament occurring 88 times. It was also the most frequent title Jesus used to refer to himself. The phrase simply means that he was an ordinary human being, but it also had a prophetic meaning to Jesus as a Jew and to his Jewish listeners alluding to a prophecy of Daniel. When Jesus uses the title of himself, he clearly sees himself as that specific figure in Daniel.

Daniel 7:13-14:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴ And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

In this passage Daniel seems to be using “son of man” as a name for the Messiah who was to be a great leader who would set up an eternal Kingdom of God. Many scholars believe that Jesus used “Son of Man” in the same way saying, “At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:26). (See also Matthew 24:30; 25:31; 26:64 Mark 14:62; Luke 21:27;22:69.)

We can see clearly at his trial that Jesus equated “son of man,” the one who would bring in God’s everlasting kingdom, with “the Christ, the Son of God.”

Matthew 26:62-65:

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee? ⁶³ But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. ⁶⁴ Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. ⁶⁵ Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

In contrast to the use of the phrase in Ezekiel, its use in the New Testament is always with the article. As this is the case it transforms the phrase from a general designation for mankind to a specific title for one particularly special, relevant person. Jesus not only called himself “son of man” (Matthew 16:13), but he used it as a way to refer to himself in the third person (Luke 12:8).

The first man, “Adam” was given dominion over the works of the Creator (Genesis 1:26). When he sinned (Genesis 3), his dominion was forfeited. Now the second Adam, “the Lord from heaven” (I Corinthians 15:47) has reclaimed that universal dominion. As “the Son of God” he is “the heir of all things” (Hebrews 1:2). As “the Son of man” he is the heir to that dominion in the earth which was entrusted to the first man and forfeited by him.

Affirmations: Jesus reigns as the son of man. I subject myself to the dominion of God and His only begotten son.

Conversation Starters: Why was Jesus called son of God and son of man? How did Jesus describe himself most frequently?

Recommended Reading: Daniel 7; Luke 12; Mark 13

Mark 10:47:

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

In Israel, there were many people who could trace their lineage to King David. But when people called Jesus “Son of David,” they clearly were indicating their belief in him to be the Messiah, the long-expected king of David’s line who would come and restore the kingdom. Although Jesus never spoke of himself as the “Son of David,” others did — particularly those who had a need and approached him asking for mercy.

The phrase, “the son of David,” is first used in Matthew 1:1. Then the next 8 times it is used of Jesus in Matthew, it is associated with healing. It indicates that they recognized him as the promised Messiah who was to come with healing in his wings, as we read in Malachi 4:2. In Matthew 9:27 two blind men approached Jesus and cried out, “Thou son of David, have mercy on us.” Later in Matthew 20:30 two more blind men cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.” Blind Bartimaeus also cried out saying, “Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me.” The Syro-Phoenician woman addressed Jesus as “O Lord, Son of David.” When the people saw the healing miracles that Jesus did, they asked, “Is not this the son of David?” Even the Pharisees and the scribes recognized that the Messiah would be known as the “son of David.” During Jesus’ triumphal entry, “the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’” (Matthew 21:9, 15).

Sometimes, instead of son, Jesus is called the seed or offspring of David. II Timothy 2:8 says, “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” Jesus also calls himself “the root and the offspring of David” in Revelation 22:16. In several Old Testament passages, this future descendant of David is simply referred to figuratively as “David” (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5).

Jesus is also called the root, branch or shoot. These metaphors are based on the idea of a “family tree,” with Jesse (David’s father) sometimes and David sometimes himself designated as the root, branch or shoot. Isaiah has several of them:

Isaiah 4:2:

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious. . . .

Isaiah 11:1,10:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: ¹⁰ And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. [Paul also cites this in Romans 15:12.]

Isaiah 53:2:

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. . . .

Jeremiah and Zechariah also use the image of the Branch when speaking of the coming Messiah:

Jeremiah 23:5:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Jeremiah 33:15:

In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

Zechariah 3:8:

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

Zechariah 6:12:

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:

These four verses, along with Isaiah 4:2, are used in direct prophetic reference to the Messiah and the four aspects of his life. The first two portray the “branch” as king, the aspect Matthew emphasizes. The third as servant, the aspect Mark emphasizes. The fourth as man, the aspect Luke emphasizes. Then Isaiah 4:2 portrays the “branch” as directly from the Lord, the aspect of Jesus as the Son of God that John emphasizes.

Affirmations: Jesus the son of David has mercy on me. I shout, “Hosanna to the son of David!”

Conversation Starters: Why was Jesus called the son of David? Why are there four gospels?

Recommended Reading: Jeremiah 23 & 33

Isaiah 9:6:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah has many notable prophecies of the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-2; 11:1-5; 40:1-5; 52:13-14; 53:1-12; 61:1-2). The one found above has been lauded in song (Handel's Messiah, His Name is Wonderful, Come Now O Prince of Peace, O Wondrous Name By Prophets Heard, etc.) and is the focus of our lesson for today.

The phrase "his name shall be called" means the same thing as "he will be." His life will be such so that the attributes listed are appropriate descriptions of his power and work. In Hebrew thought a name represented the character, nature and overall life of the person, and parents often named their children to indicate the hopes and dreams they had for their child's life.

So sure is the certainty with which Isaiah spoke that the past tense is used for something that is still future. This figurative language is called the prophetic perfect, and the prophecies written in the past tense mark the certainty of their future fulfillment. Even though Isaiah wrote more than 700 years before the birth of Christ, the Hebrew text reads, "To us a child has been born, to us a son has been given, and the government has been on his shoulders, and he has been called Wonderful, Counselor. . . ."

Wonderful is derived from the verb meaning to be marvelous, wonderful, surpassing, extraordinary, or separate by distinguished action. It is applied to anything that is great or wonderful as a miracle and is used here to denote the unusual and remarkable assemblage of qualities suited to excite the wonder and amazement that distinguished the Messiah. Many recent translations combine the first two terms to mean "Wonder of a Counselor" (BBE, CJB, ESV, GWN, NAB, NAS, NAU, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRS) as do some of the ancient versions such as the Septuagint and the Chaldee. Counsellor denotes one of honorable rank; one who is suited to stand near princes and kings as their adviser and is expressive of great wisdom and of qualifications to guide and direct.

The phrase translated "Mighty God" in Isaiah 9:6 is the Hebrew, *el gibbor*. That phrase, in the plural form, is used in Ezekiel 32:21 of dead "heroes" or mighty men. It is translated "mighty leaders" in the NIV and "the strong among the mighty" in the KJV and NASB. The Hebrew phrase, when used in the singular, can refer to one "mighty leader" just as when used in the plural it can refer to many "mighty leaders."

The word God in the Hebrew culture had a much wider range of application than it does in ours. A man who is acting with God's authority can be called "god." Although English makes a clear distinction between "God" and "god," the Hebrew language, which has only capital letters, cannot. A better translation for the English reader would be "mighty hero," or "divine hero." Both Martin Luther and James Moffatt translated the phrase as "divine hero" in their Bibles. The Mighty One, a translation of El in Ezekiel 31:11 used of a Babylonian king would be good in Isaiah 9:6 also.

The Everlasting Father: In the culture of the Bible, anyone who began anything or was very important in establishing something was called its "father." Jabal was the first one to live in a tent and raise livestock, so he is noted as "the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock" (Genesis 4:20). His brother Jubal was the first inventor of musical instruments, so he is called, "the father of all who play the harp and flute" (Genesis 4:21). Scripture is not using "father" in the sense of literal father or ancestor. Rather, it is used with the cultural understanding of either one who was the first to do something or someone who was important in establishing something. Because the Messiah was the first to rise to everlasting life with a new body he is "the father" or prototype of everlastingness.

The Prince of Peace: Christ has been exalted by God to be a Prince and a Savior (Acts 5:31). As a prince (Greek *archēgos*) he is first in line and stands at the head to lead. He is called the prince of peace in that he is the author of peace between Jew and Gentile by abrogating the ceremonial law, the enmity between them. He is also the author of peace between God and sinners by the blood of the cross, having the chastisement of their peace laid upon him by the Father who was in him reconciling the world to Himself. He is called the "Prince of life" for the same reason (Acts 3:15).

A good translation of the end of Isaiah 9:6 would be: "...and his name shall be called Wonder of a Counselor, the Strong Mighty Leader, the Prototype of Everlastingness, the Prince of Peace." We have a savior who was anticipated and came the first time in answer to such wonderful prophecies of his birth and life on earth. He will just as surely come a second time to usher in our reign with him throughout eternity.

Affirmations: Jesus is my hero. I love to sing the "Hallelujah" chorus.

Conversation Starters: Who is the Prince of peace? Why was Jesus called wonderful counselor?

Recommended Reading: Isaiah 9; Ezekiel 31 & 32

I Corinthians 8:4b-6:

...there is none other God but one. ⁵ For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) ⁶ But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

God and Jesus are one in purpose. They always have been, and they always will be. He is our lord and savior, our example in whose steps we walk. He clearly taught us to worship the Father alone. He clearly taught us to pray to the Father and not to him. He is still about his Father's business, but he is not everywhere present. He has bought us back and brought us back to God. We honor him and respect him as God's only begotten son. However, we worship and pray to God alone for Jesus himself taught us to do so.

I Corinthians 8:4 says, "there is none other God but one." That's why we only worship the Lord our God. That's why we only pray to our loving heavenly Father. This is simple, and this is Biblical. The relationship between the believer, Jesus Christ and God is clearly presented in one verse in I Corinthians 8. There is only one God, but there are many things that people call God and treat as God. That does not make them God. It reads, "for though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many.)" It is true that people worship a lot of different gods. Verse 6 continues: "But to us. . . ." "Us" refers to Paul, Sosthenes, the Corinthians and the entire Church of God. Verse six says for us born again believers, "there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him."

There it is. This one simple verse shows the relationship of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the believer. It speaks of one God and one Lord Jesus Christ and the believers. God provided all things for the Church via Jesus Christ. This verse states clearly that Christians have one God who is the ultimate source of all things and one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the way by which God provided all things to the Church.

The Greek mathematician Euclid used the same prepositions used in verse six when discussing and presenting geometry. The three prepositions used in verse six are translated into the English prepositions "of," "in," and "by." "Of" is the Greek preposition *ek*. "In" is the Greek preposition *eis*. "By" is the Greek preposition *dia*. These are represented pictorially in the following manner. *Ek* is represented as motion out from the center of an object. *Eis* is represented as motion all the way unto and reaching an object. *Dia* is represented as motion completely through an object.

I Corinthians 8:6:

But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of [*ek*] whom *are* all things, and we in [*eis*] him and one Lord Jesus Christ, by [*dia*] whom *are* all things, and we by [*dia*] him.

This verse shows us a picture of all things proceeding from God and going to the believers. All things come from God, and they reach the believers. The reverse is also true showing the reciprocal relationship — motion out from us reaching all the way to God. God reaching out to the believers and the believers having access all the way back to God. *Dia* is the word through. The first *dia* shows the same things we read in the beginning of the verse proceeding from God through Jesus Christ to the believers. The second *dia* shows the reciprocal relationship where the believers have access through Jesus Christ all the way back to God.

All things come from God to the believer through the accomplished work of Jesus Christ, and the believer has access to all God has available through the accomplished work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was never designed to be the destination for our prayer and worship, God was. Jesus is our way to God. We get to God through him. God reached to mankind through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and unsaved man (I Timothy 2:5). Jesus Christ is the way the truth and the life (John 14:6). No man gets to the Father but by him.

God predestinated us unto the adoption of children by [*dia*] Jesus Christ to [*eis*] himself (Ephesians 1:5). Ephesians 2:18 says that through [*dia*] Jesus Christ, we have access unto the Father. God reached out to mankind through His son our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We understand God's love because Jesus Christ showed it to us. We understand how to operate the power of God because Jesus Christ showed us how. Jesus Christ fully declared God (John 1:18). He made known to us his Father. In him the fullness of God was displayed and revealed, and we are complete in him (Colossians 2:9,10).

All the promises of God come through Jesus Christ. They are yea and amen in him (II Corinthians 1:20). When we pray for the things of God we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. When God provides His promises, He too does it through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to make a relationship with God available to us. He is the means to that end. God wants our relationship with Him to be the most important thing in our lives. Jesus Christ is the means to accomplish it.

Affirmations: Jesus Christ is my access to God. The things of God come to me through Jesus Christ.

Conversation Starters: How do you pray? Do you believe in one God?

Recommended Reading: I Corinthians 8

Revelation 5:11,12:

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; ¹² Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, [and] honour, and glory, and blessing.

“Worthy” is the Greek word *axios*, used to designate one who has merited something of value. The list proceeds to describe what that value is. It is marked with the figure of speech polysyndeton, “many ands.” Each “and” phrase is important and should be noted specifically and contemplated. The attributes listed here enumerate what Jesus received when he ascended to the right hand of God. The word “receive,” is *lambanō* which indicates that one uses or does something with what has been received. Jesus utilizes each and every one of these attributes as he carries out his responsibilities at the right hand of God. Let’s investigate them.

“**Power**” is *dunamis*. It refers to the ability to perform something by virtue of its nature. Jesus received immense power when he ascended to the right hand of God. He said in Matthew 28:18 that “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” The verb “is given” is in the aorist tense and should be translated, “has been given.” It is an example of the prophetic perfect where a future event is spoken of in the past tense due to the absolute certainty of it happening. Jesus certainly had awesome power during his ministry upon earth. However he was officially exalted and given the titles Lord and Christ when he was raised from among the dead (Acts 2:31-36). Ephesians 1:20 states that Jesus “officially” received this awesome power when he was raised from among the dead and sat at the right hand of God in the heavenlies. He legally obtained it at the resurrection but practically claimed it upon the ascension.

“**Riches**” is *ploutos*. These riches are spiritual and enormous; Ephesians 3:8 calls them “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Because we are joint heirs with Christ we have access to them, too. Our Lord is rich unto all that call upon him (Romans 10:12). In The Marvelous Mystery Tour we looked at how we abound in these riches. II Corinthians 8:7-9 lists six of them and Romans 15:13 notes a seventh. These spiritual riches abound in faith, utterance [speaking the word], knowledge, all diligence [efficiency], love [*agapē*], the grace of giving and hope.

“**Wisdom**” is *sophia*. This does not refer to ordinary wisdom. This is extreme wisdom; it is immense. This quality that characterizes our ascended lord is available to us, for he “is made unto us wisdom” (I Corinthians 1:30) and all we need do to receive it is ask (James 1:5). Jesus is able to apply everything he has learned as he comes to the aid of his own. Not only does he have the power to accomplish what he wills, but he has the wisdom to know what is best.

“**Strength**” is *ischus*. It is ability, force and strength evidenced in extraordinary deeds. Jesus Christ is going to need all that immense strength to subdue all things to himself as I Corinthians 15:24-28 predicts. He will be leading the spiritual army in the Book of Revelation. We also have the strength in him to do whatever is requested of us by God (Philippians 4:13).

“**Honour**” is *timē*. It is used of the honour that one has by reason of rank and state of office which he holds. Jesus holds the very highest rank. He is the preeminent one; his name is above every name. He is to God what Joseph was to Pharaoh, his “right-hand-man.” Pharaoh put all things under Joseph; nothing got done in Egypt without Joseph. Jesus is where he is serving like he does because the Father placed him there. Recognizing and honoring Jesus’ grandeur is becoming. John 5:23 says, “That all *men* should honour [*timaō*] the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” No one is ever honored for what they received. Honor is the reward for what one has given.

“**Glory**” is *doxa*. Thayer defines glory as: “magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, majesty” and “a most glorious condition, most exalted state; of that condition with God the Father in heaven to which Christ was raised after he had achieved his work on earth.” This is glory to the nth degree.

“**Blessing**” is *eulogia*. *Eulogia* means to speak well of, to praise, to laud. It is what the people did for Jesus when they spread palm branches before him and cried, “Hosanna: Blessed [*eulogeō*] is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Jesus is worthy to be lauded for his redemptive work and his example. A lot of evangelism, which is the good messenger delivering the good word, involves informing people of what Jesus did for them and lauding it. Jesus is the grand subject of the entire Bible and in that sense he definitely is to be lauded to the highest. Thus the word, blessing, *eulogia*, can also be understood to have the same kind of grandeur as the other items on the list.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has been exalted by God and we would do well to do the same. He has been placed 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. God has put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, which is his body, whose fullness fills us all (Ephesians 1:21-23). These ascended attributes of our Savior are enormous and unsearchable. It will take all eternity to appreciate what the Father has accomplished for us through his son.

Affirmations: I exalt my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus is my head and I line myself up to his example.

Conversation Starters: What power and riches are available to Jesus? What honor and glory is due Jesus?

Recommended Reading: Revelation 5

Luke 10:19:

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

The truth of God’s Word guarantees victory over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Despite how the adversary tries to cloak his activities with darkness, our God will show us the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places (Isaiah 45:3) so we can walk confidently as His sons in this day and time. Discerning of spirits handles in the spiritual realm what word of knowledge and word of wisdom handle in the natural realm. It covers both the information and the direction (i.e. the knowledge of their presence or influence and what to do about it).

In the account of the healing of the man with Legion (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39) Jesus used his authority over the devil’s kingdom and commanded the evil spirits to leave the man (Luke 8:29). The devil spirits recognized the authority of Jesus and left the man. In Acts 16:16-19 the devil spirit also recognized the authority of Paul and described him as a servant of the most high God. When we walk confidently in the spirit, they will also recognize us in the same way. They know the One True God and those who work for Him.

James 2:19:

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

The devils know Who the one True God is, and they know those who love and serve Him. They bristle, shudder and are struck with extreme fear when confronted by the One True God and His representatives. They know they are no match for a believing believer.

Devil spirits are expelled by a word of command issued in the name of Jesus Christ with the power of God. It is not done the way you may have seen it on TV on “Charmed” or “Supernatural.” It is not by invocation of a superior but essentially similar spirit (like an exorcism, as in Acts 19:13-17.) nor by the use of material media (crosses, garlic, etc.), nor by spells or incantations (vain repetitions).

Some people refer to these confrontations as “power encounters.” They view them as the power of a walking son of God versus the power of the devil spirit. However, I prefer to think of them as “truth encounters.” It is really a matter of truth—the truth of the Word we speak versus the lies of the devil they promote. Which do you think will prevail? Why? It really has nothing to do with how powerful we are or they are. It all revolves around the truth of the Word. They are subject to us because that’s what the Word says. We do not even need to raise our voice or be upset. We just need resolve.

Sometimes it is necessary to speak to the devils when casting them out (as in the account of Legion). Doing it at other times can be very tormenting to the people held captive.

II Timothy 2:26:

And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Jesus declared at the opening of his public ministry that part of his mission was to set the captives free (Luke 4:18). When we “go, stand, and speak” the Word (Acts 5:20), doors to minister will open. It is the preaching of the Word rightly divided that opens the doors to ministering with the power of God. Many times simply teaching the Word with authority like Jesus did (Matthew 7:29; Mark 1:22) will bring deliverance. I have seen people come off heroin cold turkey and never have any side effects. I have seen people so angry they could kill me, break out in tears after hearing the Word taught. However, there are also times when deliverance requires the specific removal of devil spirit causes before deliverance is ever realized. We do whatever it takes, and operating discerning of spirits is what tells us what we need to do.

The secret of the devil’s success is the secrecy of his moves. He moves in darkness and covers himself with mystery and enigma, but God is forever trying to make Himself and His ways known. God has given us everything we need to walk and stand for Him, and we can expect that graciousness to continue.

God will show unto us anything and everything we need to know about the devil’s kingdom to deliver people. What do you need to know about how the adversary works and binds people? The adversary cannot keep things secret from us because we have a God Who knows all and will communicate it to us. God is willing and able to teach us. We just need the meekness to receive (Psalms 25:9)

Affirmations: I have power over all the power of the enemy. I have recovered myself from the snare of the devil.

Conversation Starters: Do you exercise authority in Jesus’ name? Do you believe God watches over you?

Recommended Reading: Luke 15; II Timothy 2

Mark 16:17:

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

When Jesus appeared to John on the isle of Patmos, he said, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18). The one who has the key is the authorized one, the one with the authority to use the key. Revelation 3:7 says that he that has the key “openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.”

Just before he ascended to be seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus said, “All power [*exousia*, authority] is given me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). He then immediately delegated his authority saying, “Go ye therefore. . . teaching them. . . whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19,20). Then He promised that “these signs shall follow them that believe; **IN MY NAME** shall they. . .” He said, “in my name!” It all happens in the exercise and operation of the name of Jesus! The power and authority is in the name of Jesus.

Supernatural signs follow believers using the name of Jesus. There is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). There is salvation in that name salvation in every category of life. The name provides wholeness in body, soul and spirit. No other name can do what the name of Jesus can do!

The Father God has lifted Jesus to the highest position in creation. Jesus is the preeminent one (Colossians 1:18) seated at the right hand of the Father on high (Ephesians 1:20), far above every known authority (Ephesians 1:21), and we are seated with him (Ephesians 2:5 & 6). God has conferred upon him the most magnificent name in the universe — the name above every name.

The name Jesus has all the authority, all the power, all the dignity, all the majesty and all the glory that Jesus the person has. The name represents or stands for the person. His authority, his power, his dignity, his majesty and his glory is vested in his name, and that name is given to us!

Would to God that we could catch a glimpse of what it means to live in the power of his name. E. W. Kenyon cried, *“Oh, that our eyes were open; that our souls would dare rise into the realm of Omnipotence where the Name would mean to us all that the Father has invested in it; that we would act up to our high privileges in Christ Jesus. This is practically an unexplored tableland in Christian experience. Here and there, some of us have experienced the authority vested in the Name of Jesus. We have seen the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see; those on the verge of death brought back instantly to health and vigor; but, so far, none of us have been able to take a permanent place in our privileges and abide where we may enjoy the fullness of this mighty power.”* (New Land Ahead)

Let’s read Paul’s heartfelt prayer which displays God’s longing for us.

Ephesians 3:14-21:

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; ¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. ²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, ²¹ Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The name of our Lord Jesus Christ belongs to the entire family of God. We are all named in him. We have the right and honorable privilege to use his name for the glory of God. Let’s pray that the eyes of our understanding be enlightened so that we may know:

Ephesians 1:18b-23:

. . . what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, ²⁰ Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²² And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³ Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

As the body of Christ, let’s function properly and teach and preach in his name with signs following us who believe.

Affirmations: Signs follow me because I believe. I grow daily in operating the power available in Jesus’ name.

Conversation Starters: Are you in the family of God? Do you use the name of Jesus?

Recommended Reading: Ephesians 3 & 4

Using Retemories

Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13 record the devil's assault on and temptation of Jesus. Both accounts highlight the victorious battle cry of our savior. "It is written!" was the standard he used against the assaults and temptations. Jesus brought the power of God to bear into the situations with a declaration of "It is written!" Not only did he use the battle cry, but he quoted God's Word following it. He used the appropriate Word of God, the sword of the spirit, to be victorious in every confrontation.

He went to the Word. That's the same privilege that we have. We go to the Word knowing that the Word will produce the same results today as it has on any day in history. The phrase, "it is written" in the Greek is in the perfect tense. The perfect tense indicates action in the past that is repeated or has its impact or completion in the present. Jesus said, "It is written," but when was it written? The verses he quoted were written many years before by Moses. It's recorded in Deuteronomy. It was written, but Jesus didn't say it **was** written. He said "It **is** written," because it was not only written at some time in the past, but it was still written that day when he needed it. It was **still** God's Word. When he used it in that perfect tense he brought the impact of that Word to that specific situation that he was facing in life.

He spoke "It is written," and it backed down the adversary. He overcame that situation. He came out a victor, a conqueror, because of the Word that he knew. It's the Word that liveth and abideth forever. (I Peter 1:23) It is the living Word of a living God, and we live upon the firm foundation it provides. The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:93, "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me." "Quickened me" is old English for "made me alive." He's made us alive! His words are words of life! They bring us life!

How can folks be bored when they have the Word of God? Psalm 119:92 declares, "Unless thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction." Like Jesus, the psalmist knew that the Word made him victorious in the different situations of life he faced, and that's why he swore to never forget it. Too many people think... someday. I'll be healed someday... I'll be victorious someday... I'll be able someday... Someday! Someday! Someday!

We need to change our thinking to "this day." Why wait for someday? Why not expect it and accept it today? God hasn't made "someday" yet. If you wait for someday, it's never going to get here because it's somewhere down the road. But this day is here. This day is what we have to live and enjoy, and that's what God has for us. We should be thinking that we will see the power of God right now, this day. We want to enjoy God's victory and God's power today, right now. That's why we speak the Word of God. We bring the power of God to bear upon the situations we face by boldly declaring, "It is written!"

Jesus was victorious over temptation as he declared what was written. He had hidden God's Word in his heart so he could do God's will. He could say, "It is written!" because he remembered what was written. To declare *It is written*, we, too, must remember what was written. That's why we **retain** God's word in our **memory**. A **retemory** is a verse we **retain** in our **memory**. We commit verses to memory so we can use them in situations of life that require that we wield the sword of the spirit.

Psalms 119:11:

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

We put that Word in our heart to protect us and guide our hearts in the way. Loving God with all of our hearts necessitates putting God's Word into our hearts. Putting the Word of God into our hearts begins with reading and digesting it. Does the Word automatically float up into the mind and park itself? No. God's Word must be read and applied. When we read it, does it automatically permeate the innermost part of our being? No, it takes habitual and repeated effort to get something into our heart. However, our love for and delight in it will help us focus upon it.

Our hearts should sing with the psalmist, "**O** how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97) "I delight to do thy will, **O** my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8) The purpose of the "**O**" is to show some emotion and intensity of feeling. Sometimes we must summon the emotion, the resolve that we want. If it is not there, we put it there. Hebrews 10:7 tells us that Psalm 40:8 was written prophetically of Jesus. He delighted to do God's will. He had a strong desire to do his Father's will. What an example to follow! Let's make "It is written" our personal motto, too. We are *Messengers For Christ* so let's live our life as he did, victoriously in service.

Twelve Reasons for Memorizing Scripture

- 1. We are commanded to. Deuteronomy 6:6; 11:18**
- 2. Hiding the Word in the heart helps one to obey it. Deuteronomy 30:14; Psalms 37:31**
- 3. It allows for meditation, which increases our understanding of the scriptures. Psalms 119:98-100**
- 4. It will prosper us. Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3**
- 5. It provides both the standard to which we control our thinking and the means by which we do so. Romans 12:3; Philippians 4:8**
- 6. It will cleanse and transform the mind. Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:4**
- 7. It brings victory over temptation. Psalms 119:11; Ephesians 6:17; Luke 4:1-13**
- 8. It aids in witnessing and teaching. Colossians 3:16; I Peter 3:15**
- 9. It provides a basis for an effectual prayer life. I John 5:14,15**
- 10. It provides comfort during trials and bereavement. Psalms 119:50,52; I Thessalonians 4:13-18**
- 11. It provides a basis for life. Matthew 4:4; Psalms 119:93; Proverbs 4:4**
- 12. It improves our everyday conversation. Matthew 12:34**