

The Man You Must Know

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"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" 1 Tim. 2:5.

The Bible is a live and everliving book because it reveals Jesus, the everliving one. The Bible is the only history that gives Jesus His rightful place. One little child with rare insight called his Bible the "Jesus Book." Truly he spoke volumes in a single line for no elaborate description could be more accurate. The whole objective of the Bible is to reveal to mankind this wonderful Saviour. True, it contains history, prophecy, laws, poetry, and drama, but these are only aids in revealing a person to mankind.

The purpose and plan of the book is not so much to give us a code of ethics or an outline of theology, but to present its author and all His attractiveness so that men might come to Him and be saved.

Two infidels once sat in a railway car

discussing the wonderful life of Jesus. One of them said, "I think an interesting romance could be written about Him." The other immediately replied, "and you are just the man to write it. Set forth the correct view of His life and character. Tear down the prevailing sentiment as to His divinity and paint Him as He was, a man among men." This suggestion was acted upon and the romance was written. The man who made the suggestion was Colonel Robert Ingersoll, the well known skeptic. The author was General Lew Wallace. The book was Ben Hur, written while Wallace was governor of New Mexico. But something happened there in the patio of the old palace. The more the author studied the more he found himself facing the unaccountable man. And the more he studied the life and character of Jesus the more he was convinced that he was not dealing with a mere man among men. This conviction grew upon him until, like the centurion under the cross, he was led to cry "truly this was the Son of God." (Matthew 27:54.)

Who is this Jesus on whom every date in history hinges? What does He have to say for Himself? As we listen to His answer we can only say that never a man made such claims for Himself as this carpenter of Nazareth. Either He is all that He claims to be or He is the world's greatest imposter.

WHAT CHRIST CLAIMED FOR HIMSELF

Let us note a few of the claims that Jesus made for Himself.

He Claimed to be God. "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and My Father are one." John 10:30.

The people to whom He spoke immediately went about to stone Him for the sin of blasphemy that a mere man would claim to be God. Notice verse 33.

He Claimed Pre-existence. He declared that before Abraham existed He had lived and that He came down from heaven to represent the Father.

"Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and He saw it, and was glad. Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." John 8:56, 58. See John 6:38; 17:5.

He Claimed to be the Long Looked for Messiah. When the woman of Sychar declared her faith in the coming Messiah Jesus responded: "I that speak unto thee am He." John 4:26.

He Claimed Omnipotence saying: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18.

He Claimed Infallibility, declaring that before His words could fail heaven and earth would cease to exist.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35.

He Claimed to be Without Sin. All of His enemies were speechless before His challenge. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" John 8:46.

He Claimed Omnipresence as He sought to encourage His disciples to go forward in service.

"Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20.

He Claimed Foreknowledge or the power to predict coming events.

"Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe." John 13:19.

He Claimed to Forgive Sins. To the sick of the palsy He said:

"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Matthew 9:2.

He Claimed to Know the Minds and Hearts of all Men.

"But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." John 2:24, 25.

These are but a few of the claims that Jesus made for Himself. No man would dare to make these claims. If he did no one would believe him but would regard him as a lunatic. Jesus claimed all this and more and millions believe His words. There is but one conclusion to which we can come regarding Christ's claims for Himself.

They are all true. He is our divine Saviour and is able to save to the uttermost. Hebrews 7:25.

PROPHECY PROVES CHRIST- THE MESSIAH

Perhaps the strongest basis for our faith in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment in His life of approximately 300 Old Testament prophecies. What stronger proof could be asked for than the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in the life of Jesus? The true Messiah or Christ must be the Christ of the prophets. To Him give all the prophets witness. (Acts 10:43).

The life of Jesus was so fully predicted in the writings of the prophets that a complete biography of Him may be read in the Old Testament.

Place of Birth

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus the prophet Micah pointed out the very town in which the Messiah would be born.

"But thou, Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thou-

sands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2.

Was the prediction fulfilled? Most certainly! And the story of a fulfillment is most striking. Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth. Logically we would conclude that the Christ would be born in that town but almost every child knows the story of the edict sent out by the Roman ruler, Caesar Augustus, that every family must report for taxation to the old home town. Thus we find Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem, the ancient city of David when the hour struck for the fulfillment of the prophecy. It was no shrewd guess on the part of Micah that caused him to choose Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus. Only the one who sees the end from the beginning could have declared it.

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." II Peter 1:21.

His Virgin Birth

Perhaps no experience in the life of

Jesus has been more disbelieved and scoffed at than His virgin birth. But this too was a matter of prophecy. It's a part of the story of His life, written out centuries before He came to this world. To explain it in detail is impossible, for it is the "mystery of Godliness." But faith believes for there stands the prophecy written hundreds of years before that a sign would be given by God Himself.

"Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isaiah 7:14.

The record of the fulfillment of this part of the biography is recorded in Matthew 1:20-23.

The Time of the Beginning of His Messianic Work Predicted

"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Galatians 4:4, 5.

The great prophecy of Daniel 9 predicted the very year when Christ's mes-

sianic work would begin and when it would end.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." Daniel 9:25, 26.

Christ's Life and Ministry Predicted

The whole tenor of Christ's life and ministry was outlined by the prophet Isaiah. — Isaiah 61:1-3.

Truly He went about doing good. His brief but wonderful ministry was a complete fulfillment of the kind of work that He would perform and the spirit that He would manifest.

SEVEN DISTINGUISHING FEATURES ABOUT JESUS

1. *The Deityship of Jesus*

The deityship of Jesus Christ is the very foundation of the gospel. It is the

root from which the whole gospel springs. A merely human Christ cannot save us.

“A just God and a Saviour.” Isaiah 45:21. “I even I am the Lord and beside me there is no Saviour.” Isaiah 43:11.

A human Christ cannot save us. If Jesus is not Divine then we are without a Saviour and the world is without a Redeemer. But the Bible plainly shows us that Christ the Son is God and because He is God He is our Saviour. Read Isaiah 45:22; John 1:1, 3, 10, 14.

Only deity can create something from nothing. The very fact that Jesus is the Creator proves that He is God. Five other verses in the New Testament teach this same truth that Jesus was the member of the Godhead that was used to create. Read carefully Ephesians 3:9; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:14-17; Hebrews 1:1-3. In order for Christ to be our Redeemer He had to be the Creator for it takes creative power to redeem. Redemption is re-creation.

2. *The Pre-existence of Christ*

Some people believe that Christ never existed until He was born of the virgin Mary. This is a fatal error for Jesus,

as we have seen, speaks of Himself as having come into the world from above. Note John 6:38, 51; John 8:23. “He dwelt in the bosom of the Father long before He lay on the breast of Mary.” Jesus did not begin His existence here. In this respect He was different from every other person who has ever lived on this earth. See John 17:5, 24. Also Philipians 2:5-8.

The incarnation of Christ was the most marvelous event that has ever taken place. We cannot explain how God could be born into this world as a babe in human form. This is a mystery.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” I Timothy 3:16.

In order to be our Saviour it was needful that Jesus be both the Son of God and the Son of Man. As man He gave to God all that God requires from man; as God He brought to man everything that man needed from God.

3. *His Atoning Death Necessary*

Christ's death upon the cross for our sins is the very heart of the gospel.

“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” I Corinthians 15:3.

His death was a sacrificial, substitutionary, vicarious death. Read Isaiah 53:5, 6; Hebrews 2:9; Ephesians 1:7.

4. *His Resurrection Essential*

The resurrection of Jesus was the sealing act in the gospel plan. It required His resurrection to make His death on the cross effective in our salvation.

“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” I Corinthians 15:17.

A dead Saviour could not save us. If Christ had not come forth from the tomb the whole world would have perished. But thanks be to God death could not hold Him.

5. *His Ascension to Glory*

Forty days after His resurrection Christ ascended to heaven. It was just as essential for Him to go back to the Father as it was for Him to come from the Father into the world. See John 16:28; 14:3.

His ascension to the throne means the way to the throne has been opened to us.

6. *His Mediatorial Work*

Jesus is our High Priest in the heavens today. He is there making reconciliation for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:17; 7:25.

7. *His Second Coming*

Just as surely as the incarnation led to the cross and the cross to the empty grave and the empty grave to the throne so surely does the throne lead to the coming again in glory. His second coming completes the gospel plan. What harvest is to seed time the second coming of Christ is to His first advent. The harvest of the gospel will take place at the end of the world when Jesus comes. Matthew 13:39.

The revelator, John, saw Jesus coming with a sickle in His hand to reap the harvest of the earth. See Revelation 14:14, 15.

It takes these seven facts to make a complete gospel. Not one of them can be left out.

JESUS THE ONLY MEANS OF SALVATION

There is a lot of misunderstanding concerning God's plan of salvation. Some people think that their religion or joining a church saves them. But religion does not save. You may be a Protestant, Catholic, Jew, Moslem, or Hindu, but joining a religious organization and going through religious ceremonies does not save. Only Jesus Christ can save.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

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

Nicodemus, a leader among the Jews, was very religious but Jesus declared to him "ye must be born again." John 3:3. Depending upon our church membership or our religious exercises is a false hope. We must accept Jesus Christ for there is none other Saviour.

Morality Does Not Save. We are not

saved by our good life or our conformity to social standards be they ever so high. Man cannot lift himself up by his own bootstraps, neither can any human effort save from sin. All the silver and gold in the world plus all the diamonds and costly jewels could not atone for one sin.

"Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation . . . but with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." I Peter 1:18, 19.

Human Works Cannot Save. Outward conformity to rules and regulations does not save. Baptism, the Lord's supper, prayer, missionary activities, the keeping of the law of God, tithe, and a hundred other fine things taught in the Bible and expected to be seen in the Christian life does not save. Salvation is a gift.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9.

The great question that will be put

to us in the judgment day will not be "were you a moral man?" "Were you a sober man?" "Were you free from enslaving habits such as drink, tobacco, dope?" "Or were you baptised by immersion?" "Did you keep the Sabbath-day or did you pay tithe?" No, the Father will ask, "What did you do with my Son."

"Then said they unto Him what shall we do that we might work the works of God?" "Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." John 6:28, 29.

THE GREATEST QUESTION

The greatest question that was ever asked was the one that fell from the lips of Pontius Pilate nearly 2,000 years ago.

"Pilate said unto them, what shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?" Matthew 27:22.

Pilate had to answer his own question. He had to decide whether he would crucify Christ or release Him. We all know the answer. We all know

his decision. He turned Him over to the mob to be crucified. Everyone of us must do something with Jesus. Pilate made his decision and his decision was irrevocable. We must decide what we are going to do with Jesus and remember our eternal destiny depends upon our decision. We can procrastinate in answering this question only at our own peril.

Men will not be lost because of their sins but because they have failed to make use of God's remedy for sin.

"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." John 3:18.

Men are not condemned because of what they do but because of what they do not do—believe—accept God's unspeakable gift—Jesus. People will not be lost because they have murdered or stolen or have become drunkards or thieves. God will forgive any and all of these sins but he cannot forgive our rejection of Jesus Christ, His only plan to save.