

JESUS

The Christ of God

- 1 -- "Jesus—The God-Man!"
- 2 -- "Jesus—The Sacrificial Offering"
- 3 -- "The Incomparable Jesus"
- 4 -- "What It Means to Reject Jesus"
- 5 -- "Why Men Follow Jesus"
- 6 -- "What Shall I Do With Jesus?"

Prepared by:
Paul E. Cantrell

2007

Lesson One

"Jesus—the God-Man!"

To refer to a man as being God is not something that is easily believed or understood. Some outstanding claims were made about Jesus and by Jesus that would be highly unusual to be made about Him or by Him if He was a mere man. These claims state that He is God in the flesh (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-3, 14). For a Human to have this said of him or for him to make such a claim would be rejected immediately and written off as a person of unsound mind. And also, for someone to state that they believe Jesus was a great and honest teacher who had good intentions, but was delusional—such would seem to be highly inconsistent. The claims about Him and by Him need to be looked at carefully and examined to see if the evidence is sufficient to believe that He was truly God in the flesh.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea over 2000 years ago (Matthew 2:1). Was that the beginning of His existence as a being? If so, He was only a mere man like all other men. But the Bible portrays Jesus as Deity—as God—as equal with the Father (John 10:30). His birth was of a miraculous nature—conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20) and born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23). Jesus not only claimed to be God, but was condemned by the religious leaders for such a claim (John 5:16-18). He used expressions that identified Him as being equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14). If Jesus is Deity, then, his fleshly birth would indicate that God has come down in human form and lived among men (Matthew 1:23)—the very thing that was foretold of Him by the prophets

“THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE!”

The biggest problem that the Jewish religious leaders had was accepting His claim of Deity in the light of the strong emphasis upon the “ONENESS” of God in the Old Testament Scriptures (Deuteronomy 6:4). If there is only one God—then, how could Jesus be God also? But two things should have been obvious to them, if they had just stopped to evaluate: (1) Genesis 1:26, etc., uses the plural pronouns “us” and “we” which would indicate a plurality in some sense; and (2) The use of “one” in talking about the marriage of Adam and Eve certainly did not take away from there being two persons (Genesis 2:24). “Oneness” carries with it the concept of unity and harmony, which obviously can be said of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! We use such terms as the following to this oneness of God: "Triune God;" "Tri-Unity;" "and "Trinity." Man is portrayed as one, but made up of body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). By the same reasoning—God is one—but is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

THE NATURE OF GOD

An important concept that must be kept uppermost in this discussion is the Nature of Deity. We normally think in human, fleshly terms and therefore have a hard time accepting that Deity could come down in human form and live among us. But open your mind to a God who is not limited as mortal man is limited. The following statements will help to illustrate: "*God is Spirit*" (John 4:24); "*God is not a man*" (Numbers 23:19); "*No one has seen God at any time*" (1 John 4:12); "*The heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain Him*" (2 Chronicles 2:6). Deity is pictured as being outside of time and unlimited in His presence everywhere (Acts 17:28; 2 Peter 3:8; Revelations 22:13, etc.). Once we understand God's nature, it should not be a problem accepting the idea that Deity has come down to live among His creatures as a human being—if the evidence is sufficient to uphold the idea.

THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS

The very fact that Jesus claimed to be equal with the Father (John 10:30) would obviously suggest to us that Jesus had a pre-fleshly state of existence. The Bible clearly indicates such. Jesus makes the claim that He had been with the Father and upon His physical death would go back to His Father (John 16:28). The Gospel of John begins with this concept that the Word (the Son of God) was in the beginning with God (the Father), but was made flesh (Jesus) (John 1:1, 14) and dwelt among us. In reality, before there was a beginning (of man and his world), the Word (Jesus) was or existed! Jesus clearly laid claim to this concept when He said to the Jewish people, "*before Abraham was, I am!*" (John 8:58; 16:28). This was what Jesus was trying to help the Jewish leaders to see when He asked them about a statement of David in the Old Testament.

Matthew 22:41-46 _____

Even the Old Testament prophets indicated Jesus' pre-fleshly existence as they foretold of the coming Messiah.

Micah 5:2 _____
Isaiah 9:6 _____

But in Genesis chapter one we have two obvious things that should help us to believe in the pre-existence of Jesus: (1) The plural word for God (ELOHIM) that uses a singular verb; and (2) The pronouns "Us" and "Our" certainly indicate the possibility.

JESUS, THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER

Not only does the Bible claim Divinity for Jesus, but that He was the perfect revelation of God, the Father, to mankind (John 1:18). And why shouldn't He be the perfect revelation for He had been with the Father from all eternity (John 16:28)! Jesus' statement to Philip shows that those who have seen Jesus have also seen the Father (John 14:9). Thus, the invisible God has now become visible in Jesus, the man! Jesus is revealed to us as the revealer of the Father fully.

JESUS' DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURE

A question that has been debated for centuries has been over the possibility of Jesus being fully human and fully Divine at the same time. It should be obvious again that we are looking at things from a human nature viewpoint only. Jesus is God—nothing is impossible for Him to do (Luke 1:37). We have statements that indicate his full humanity.

Luke 1:35; 2:52 _____
Hebrews 4:15 _____
1 John 4:1-3 _____

And of course the many statements that we have been looking at that uphold His full Deity.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

To uphold the claims made about Him and by Him: (1) Jesus pointed to the Old Testament Prophets that foretold of His coming and His mission (Matthew 1:18-23); (2) He taught as no man ever taught (with authority) (Matthew 7:28-29; John 7:46); and (3) Performed all kinds of miracles to show that He was who He claimed to be—God's Son in the flesh (John 20:30-31).

Jesus is not presented in Scripture as merely a gifted speaker or an above average man, but as "God with us!" (Matthew 1:23). He is God that has also become a man, lived as a man, and died as a man.

If you desire further study on the things discussed in this lesson, please feel free to ask or go to a book store or someone's library that would have much additional information on the Deity of Jesus. This is a very critical issue that is basic to Christianity as an acceptable religion and the salvation of our souls. Be concerned enough to realize that these claims were made and evidence are given to uphold them.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were some things unique about the birth of Jesus?
 - a) Matthew 1:20
 - b) Matthew 1:23
2. Did Jesus claim to be equal with God? (John 10:30)
3. How do you explain this concept in the light of the statement, *“Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is ONE God?”* (Deut. 6:4)
4. What are the evidences for believing that Jesus pre-existed before His fleshly birth?
 - a) John 16:28 _____
 - b) John 1:1, 14 _____
 - c) Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6 _____
 - d) John 8:58 _____
 - e) Matthew 22:41-46 _____
5. In what sense has Jesus revealed the Father unto mankind? (John 1:18; 16:28; 14:9)
6. To whom is the creation of all things attributed? (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16-17)
7. What have you learned about Jesus from this lesson?

Lesson Two

"Jesus—The Sacrificial Offering"

The Death of Jesus (physically) was basically the same as any other man's death, but the significance of His death has made a huge difference to all mankind in one way or another. John, the baptizer, expressed that difference in his statement in:

John 1:29 _____

Jesus knew why He became a man and why He was going to die—and even the how of His death:

Matt. 26:1-2 _____

Matt. 20:18-19 _____

Jesus came to earth as a man so that He could be God's sacrificial "Sin Offering" for lost humanity.

Heb. 2:14-15 _____

Even though man plotted and killed Jesus; yet, it was the Father's plan and purpose for Jesus to die for the sins of the people.

Acts 2:22-24 _____

2 Cor. 5:18-19 _____

Jesus' advent into this world was for the purpose of bringing man back into fellowship with God. He came to "*seek and save the lost!*"

THE TRIALS OF JESUS

The Jewish ruling class was not permitted by Roman Law to put a man to death on their own, but they could pass sentence and call upon the Roman Governor to carry out their verdict. This will explain why Jesus had so many trials that He went through before He was put to death.

1. The Trial before Annas. A great multitude with swords and clubs came and arrested Jesus in the Garden at night (Matt. 26:47). He was first taken to the

house of Annas. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the presiding High Priest.

John 18:13 _____

Annas questioned Jesus about Himself and His disciples, but made no pronouncement of Judgment that we know about. He, then, sent him bound to Caiaphas (Jn. 18:24).

2. The Trial before Caiaphas. At this trial, the chief priests, elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death.

Matt. 26:59 _____

Since they were not able to find a suitable witness, the High Priest turned to question Jesus directly.

Matt. 26:63-66 _____

They passed the sentence of death on Jesus!

3. The Trial before Pontius Pilate, Roman Governor of Judea. It did not take long before Pilate realized why the Jewish Council wanted Jesus dead.

Matt. 27:18 _____

He saw no reason to put Jesus to death, but the Jewish people insisted. When Pilate learned that He was from Galilee, he sent Him to Herod (who was in Jerusalem at that time) (Lk. 23:1-7).

4. The Trial before King Herod. He questioned Jesus, but Jesus would not answer. Herod's soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him and then sent him back to Pilate without any judgment made (Lk. 23:9-11).

5. Pilate continued to try Jesus. He was being pressed for a decision. He told the people that neither he nor Herod found any reason to put Jesus to death. This obviously did not satisfy the people (Lk. 23:15). Pilate offered to put a lesser punishment on Jesus and then release Him.

Luke 23:16 _____

Pilate hit on another scheme of giving the people a choice between Barabbas or Jesus....hoping they would choose Jesus. But they didn't, and they cried for the

death of Jesus. Pilate faced the people with the question: *"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"* (Matt. 27:22). The people cried for His death and Pilate gave in to their demands (Lk. 23:24).

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

Jesus was crucified outside the city walls at a place called "Calvary" or Golgotha—"the place of the skull" (Jn. 19:17). The Roman soldiers put a sign over his head:

John 19:19

Crucifixion was a horrible way to die and only reserved for the worse of criminals. The biggest probably, in addition to the pain, was the person's efforts to breathe. Finally, the body would become exhausted, sink into unconsciousness, and die. The minimum time for such a death was about 36 hours. They were surprised that Jesus died so soon. Some suggest that He died from a ruptured heart.

Sequence:

9:00 AM – Crucified between two thieves. (Mk. 15:25)

"Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." (Jn. 19:26-27).

The crowd mocked and jeer (Mk. 15:29-32).

"Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do." (Lk. 23:34).

One of thieves rebuked the other for railing on Jesus and asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His Kingdom. Jesus promised him he would be with Him in Paradise that day. (Lk. 23:43).

12:00 to 3:00 PM – There was darkness (Matt. 27:45).

3:00 to 6:00 PM – Final words and death.

"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

"I Thirst." (Jn. 19:28).

"It is finished." (Jn. 19:30).

"Father into your hands I commit My spirit." (Lk. 23:46).

Jesus died!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is this preaching of Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:2) that shows:

1. God's justice in dealing with sin;
2. God's great wrath for sin;
3. The reality of man's sin;

4. The futility of trying to minimize our sin;
5. The real reason for sin (selfishness);
6. Most of all, it shows the infinite love of God for His creatures.

Rom. 1:16 _____

We like the Apostle should not be ashamed of this message of hope that needs to be preached to the world.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. In what way was the death of Jesus significant?**

- 2. Did Jesus know what kind of death He would die?**

- 3. Explain how that God could plan Jesus' death, but man had the free-will to make the decision to kill Him.**

- 4. What does it mean that Jesus came to seek and save the lost?**

- 5. Who were Annas and Caiaphas?**

- 6. Why did the Jewish Leaders sentence Jesus to death?**

- 7. Why did neither Pilate nor Herod condemn Jesus to death?**

- 8. Why did Pilate give in to the Jewish people's demands?**

- 9. Did both thieves rail on Jesus at first?**

- 10. Why did Jesus cry out that God had forsaken Him?**

Lesson Three

"The Incomparable Jesus"

One of the great miracles of Jesus was the calming of the winds and the sea (Matt. 8:23-27). When this was done in the presence of the disciples, they marveled! They questioned: ***Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?***" The King James Version says: ***"What manner of man is this?"*** And well might they ask such a question! For no one has been like Him—ever! He is the incomparable Jesus! More than 1900 years ago:

*A man was born contrary to the **Laws of Nature**.
 He lived in **Poverty** and was raised in **Obscurity** until 30 years old.
 He never traveled very far from his home town of Nazareth.
 He possessed neither **Wealth** nor **Formal Education**.
 For about **3 years**, He lived and taught among the Jewish people.
 He **healed** multitudes—no medicine—and no charge!
 He never **wrote a book**, but libraries cannot hold the books
 written about Him and His teachings.
 He never **wrote a song**, yet He has furnished the theme for
 unending songs.
 He never **founded a college**, yet He has had more students than
 all colleges put together.
 He never **marshaled an army, drafted soldiers, nor fired a gun** ,
 and yet: No leader ever had more volunteers; and no
 army has ever accomplished so much for peace.
 He never practiced **Psychiatry**, yet He has healed more broken
 hearts than all doctors put together.
 Each week **multitudes** make an attempt to pay Him homage and
 respect.
 While the name of great men come and go, the **name of this man**
 continues to abound.
 In the words of the disciples: **"What manner of man is this?"**
 (Author unknown)*

This man is acclaimed with the highest of all glory! He is proclaimed as "God in the flesh—the Son of God!" He is acknowledged and worshipped by Angels. He is acknowledged and worshipped by His people as the Christ, man's redeemer. He is feared by the Devil and His Angels. He is preached through the world. Every time a letter is written and dated, we pay tribute to His birth. His life and teachings have shaped the Literature, Art, Architecture, and Music of the world. No life has had more impact for good than HIS! How do we deal with such a life or such a man?

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN.....?

1. His Life and Teachings? His formal education was meager but He taught as no man had taught—and with authority!

Matt. 7:29 _____

His teachings still challenge the most learned men on earth! He stated that He came to serve and not to be served; to save and not to condemn.

Matt. 20:28 _____

John 12:47 _____

He lived a life above sin in a sinful world. But instead of being self-righteous, he was compassionate and caring. He was even able to show love for His enemies.

1 Pet. 2:21-22 _____

Luke 23:34 _____

2. His Great Claims? He made claims of what He could do for people!

Luke 9:23-24 _____

Lk. 14:26-27 _____

He made claims about Himself that no mere man could have made without being considered "crazy!"

John 14:6 _____

John 14:9 _____

For a mere man to make such claims is incomprehensible! We believe that there is only one answer that will satisfy—He is the "Christ" of God! His resurrection from the grave proves that He is the Son of God with power!

Rom. 1:4 _____

He not only foretold His death and resurrection, but His empty tomb confirms it and the Apostles could say: "*we are witnesses!*" (Acts 2:32).

THE CHRIST (The Anointed One)

The greatest thing that could be said about Jesus is that He is the Christ, the Son of God! He is the One appointed by God to be the Savior of men! He came to give "life," "abundant life," and "eternal life" to men.

Jesus, the Christ, shines brighter as man's redeemer! He offers forgiveness, cleansing, and freedom from guilt. He offers a new life to all. This life is one of meaning and purpose. It is a life of which we do not have to be ashamed. It is a life that brings joy, hope, and peace. The following is an interesting comparison:

*Jesus and Alexander the Great died at thirty-three.
One died in Babylon; and one on Calvary.
One gained all for self; and one Himself He gave.
One conquered every throne, the other every grave.*

*The one made himself god; the God made Himself less.
The one lived to blast; the other but to bless.
When died the Greek, forever fell his throne of swords;
But Jesus died to live forever, Lord of lords.*

*Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three.
One lived and died for self; one died for you and me.
The Greek died on a throne; the Jew on a cross:
One life a triumph seemed; the other but a loss.*

*One led vast armies forth; the other walked alone:
One shed a whole world's blood; the other gave His own.
One won the whole world in life and lost it all in death;
The other lost His life to win the whole world's faith.*

*Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three:
The Greek made all men slaves, the Jew made all men free.
One built a throne on blood; the other built on love:
The one was born of earth; the other from above.
One won all this earth to lose all earth and heaven,
The other gave up all, that all to Him be given.
The Greek forever died; the Jew forever lives:
He loses all who gets, and wins all things who gives.
--Charles Ross Weede*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Through the centuries, men have viewed the incomparable Christ and have exclaimed as did Thomas: "**My Lord and my God!**" And they gave their all to follow Him. The important question now is: *What do you think of Jesus, the Christ of God?* Are you willing to come under His gentle yoke and let him lead you into eternal life?

Matt. 11:28-30

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. Who made the statement: "What manner of man is this?"**
- 2. Did Jesus ever do any writing that we know about?**
- 3. What does the dating of a letter have to do with Jesus?**
- 4. How do we know if Jesus had any "formal" education?**
- 5. Do the Scripture actually say that Jesus did not sin?**
- 6. Did Jesus ever claim that He was God in the flesh?**
- 7. Why is Jesus' resurrection so important?**
- 8. Did Jesus actually foretell His death?**
- 9. Did Jesus come to give life, abundant life, and eternal life?**
- 10. How do we know about Jesus' age?**
- 11. How do we know about the age of Alexander the Great?**
- 12. Why did Alexander die so young?**
- 13. What value did you get out of reading about this comparison of Jesus and Alexander the Great?**
- 14. What do you think of Jesus, the Christ of God?**

"What it Means to Reject Jesus"

Most of us are deluged with people wanting to sell us something! They call us over the telephone, advertise on TV and the Internet, as well as in stores, etc. In most instances, we are able to turn them down and say "No thank you!" But there is one offer to buy that we should not turn down! It is too important not to buy it! Jesus illustrated its importance by telling two Parables—(1) The Parable of the Hidden Treasure; and (2) The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:44-46). In both cases the person saw the value in the item and paid the cost! Jesus offers mankind salvation. It is free because we do not have enough money to buy it. But, if it is free, then why are we supposed to buy it? We buy it in the sense that we accept it on His terms! What He offers is free, but not unconditional. There are conditions tied to it. But what if we say "No!" to His offer?

Mark 16:15-16 _____

Let's look closer at what it means to reject Jesus and His offer of Salvation.

REJECTING JESUS

We reject Jesus' offer when we do not believe and obey His words. He and His words are inseparably tied together.

John 12:48 _____
John 17:17 _____

It is not enough to "say" that we believe in Jesus or believe in His word; we must show it by our obedience to His words.

Luke 6:46 _____
James 2:17-24 _____

Thus, how we listen to Jesus' words indicate what we think of Him.

OUTCOME OF REJECTION

What is the outcome of rejecting Jesus and His offer? Why should I be concerned about such? The following Scriptures will illustrate!

John 12:48 _____
John 8:24 _____

Jesus' first coming was for the purpose of providing Salvation for mankind. If men reject his offer; then at his second coming, he will come as their judge.

And when we reject Jesus' offer, we are also setting ourselves against God, Himself. The reason should be obvious—it was God, the Father, who sent Jesus into the world with His message!

John 12:49 _____
John 8:47 _____

The closeness of the Father and Son is of such a nature, that if you reject one you reject the other!

John 10:30 _____
2 John 9 _____

To listen to and obey the message Jesus taught is to have fellowship with both the Father as well as the Son. But if I reject Jesus' teachings, I do not have fellowship with either!

Such a rejection is like calling God a liar—"we don't believe you!" Or, we may just not care about what God or His Son has to say or offer. Either way, we make light of God's offer.

Rom. 2:4-11 _____

Or, we could be saying: *"God, I prefer to walk in darkness rather than in your light."*

John 3:19-21 _____

Jesus' offer is for us to walk in light! To reject His offer is to desire to continue to walk in darkness.

Also, when we reject Jesus' offer of Redemption, we show contempt for His great love for us. We treat lightly His sacrificial death for us.

Heb. 10:28-31 _____

John 15:13 _____
Rom. 5:8 _____

Sadly, if we reject Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, there is no other sacrifice to which we can turn for forgiveness and redemption.

Heb. 10:26 _____
John 6:68 _____

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In reality, when we reject Jesus' offer, we lose the benefits of His death for us and all that goes with it:

- a) The removal of guilt.
- b) Peace with God.
- c) A Relationship with God.
- d) I lose being a child of God.
- e) I lose being a new creation with a new outlook and new opportunities, etc.

In Saunders, WV, a Dam broke and the town was covered with water, rock, silt, and waste. More than seventy people were killed. People had been warned of its dangers time and again. One person remarked: *"Maybe we had been warned too many times."*

It is possible that we humans can hear God's offer of Salvation so much that it just falls on deaf ears. We pay no heed—thinking there is plenty of time later. Or, we hear it so often that our hearts become hardened to it.

Heb. 3:13 _____

Or, will we come to the point where what Stephen said to the Jewish people, could also be said to us?

Acts 7:51-54 _____

Jesus was the Master Teacher! But, even He did not try to force people to accept His offer. He continually and emotionally called for them to come and receive what He had to offer, but they would not accept Him.

Matt. 23:37-39 _____

Has the offer of Jesus to save you become trite—uninteresting? Do the warnings of eternal punishment for turning down His offer bring no fear to your heart? The dangers are real—we all need to accept Jesus' gracious offer!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. What two Parables illustrate the great value of what Jesus is offering to mankind?**
- 2. What are the conditions tied to God's offer of Salvation?**
- 3. Why is acceptance of Jesus' words so important?**
- 4. When does Jesus become our Judge and not our Savior?**
- 5. How can I set myself against God?**
- 6. Who is it that will have fellowship with both the Father and the Son?**
- 7. Does rejection of Jesus' offer make God a liar?**
- 8. How do we show our preference in how we walk?**
- 9. Who is the person that treats lightly Jesus' death?**
- 10. To what other sacrifice can man turn for forgiveness if he rejects Jesus' offer?**
- 11. What all do I lose if I reject Jesus' offer?**
- 12. Has the offer of Jesus to save you become trite?**
- 13. Do you fear punishment if you turn down Jesus' offer?**

Lesson Five

"Why Men Follow Jesus"

During the three years of Public Ministry among the Jewish people, Jesus had created a large following (Matt. 4:25). They seemed to have been following Him for various reasons:

- 1) Some followed out of curiosity.
- 2) Some because there was a crowd.
- 3) Some for what they could get out of Jesus (Jn. 6:26).
- 4) Some to find fault with Him, to criticize Him, to condemn Him.
- 5) Many of those who followed were: insincere, shallow, selfish, and emotionally worked up.
- 6) Some, however, followed Jesus out of sincerity—seeking for truth.
- 7) Some were looking for their long-promised Messiah.

But, why do people generally follow anyone—back then or even now? It is usually to satisfy a felt need: physically, emotionally, or spiritually. They feel that the person has something worthwhile to offer them. Very often, an appeal is successfully made to their fears, the need of reward, or to their adventurous spirit, etc. In this lesson, we want to suggest four possible reasons why men should follow Jesus!

BECAUSE JESUS IS THE CHRIST

When Jesus confronted and taught the woman at the well, she became His follower—and at the same time tried to encourage others to follow Jesus as well.

John 4:29 _____
John 4:42 _____

The Apostles followed Him because of this.

Matt. 16:16 _____
John 6:66-69 _____

If we are convinced that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; then, we too, will become a follower of Jesus—even unto death itself .

Rev. 2:10 _____

The Apostles were convinced and gave their lives in service to Him in order to get the message to all nations (Mk. 16:15). Are we convinced?

BECAUSE WE ARE POOR IN SPIRIT

Jesus gave what is often called the "Beatitudes," during His Sermon on the Mount. In these Beatitudes, He was really indicating why people would follow Him. The first Beatitude states: "***Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***" To be poor in spirit is to recognize one's poverty of spirit. It is to give recognition that we have departed from God and need to humble ourselves and returned to Him. It is a sensing of our unworthiness as God's creature because of our sinfulness. We need His forgiveness and help so that we can get on the right way to walk. Until a person empties themselves of their sense of undue importance, they will never really accept Christ.

Jas. 4:10 _____
Matt. 18:3 _____

Men will become a follower of Jesus today if they realize their need of Him and let Him teach them the way they should walk.

BECAUSE WE SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS

Men have various needs to be fulfilled: Physical, Emotional, Social, and Spiritual. Unfortunately, the Spiritual need is often neglected in order to satisfy the lower physical needs. But even though neglected, the need is still there. Jesus made this concept clear.

Matt. 4:4 _____
Matt. 5:6 _____

The spirit of man needs to be fed and satisfied. Our soul longs to be right with our Creator. We seek to have that righteousness that only God can give through Christ. Those that find God and His righteousness must have the kind of heart that is **Good, Open, and seeking after Him!**

Heb. 11:6 _____
Matt. 13:23 _____

To walk in righteousness, we must walk in the Light of God's Truth. We will not love sin and rebellion against God, but truth and righteousness.

John 3:19-21 _____

As men seek for the right, they see in Jesus that which is right and that He can make them right with God. They see Truth and Righteousness in Him that their soul craves.

BECAUSE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTION

If there were no consequences to wrong-doing, what motivation would we have to avoid such and do what is right? If there were no reward for doing right, what motivation would we have to do so? The answer to both questions is very obvious! Men will only turn to Jesus when they see how sinful they are and how much this causes God's heart to ache—but even more, when they learn of the terrible consequences of sin!

Matt. 25:41, 46 _____

When Jesus stated that the person who mourns will be comforted, He evidently was calling on men to see their sinfulness and show remorse over such rebellion against God.

Matt. 5:4 _____
2 Cor. 7:10 _____

Men may mourn over many things in life: Disappointments, Bereavements, Diseases, Poverty, Social Slander, Oppression, Moral Contrition, etc. But none of these things are primarily what Jesus had in mind. It is in Jesus:

- 1) That we can see our imperfections;
- 2) That His perfect obedience shows up our great disobedience;
- 3) That His unselfishness shows up our terrible selfishness;
- 4) That His death on the Cross shows us the ENORMITY of our sinfulness.
- 5) And we can see in Him the forgiveness we need, and that comforting that our soul longs for and needs.
- 6) And through Him, we can escape the just penalty of our sins!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Why would not men want to follow such a Savior! If you are not a follower of Him—is it because:

- a) You do not recognize Him as the Christ, the Son of God?
- b) Or, is it because of too much pride in your heart?
- c) Or, is it because of no real interest in Righteousness?
- d) Or, is it because you fail to see your need of the forgiveness of God?

Whatever the reason, would you consider seriously the value of following and serving Him?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. Why did people follow Jesus during His public ministry?**

- 2. Why do people generally follow someone?**

- 3. Will people follow Jesus even if they do not believe He is the Christ, the Son of God?**

- 4. Why did the woman at the well follow Jesus?**

- 5. Why does a person have to be "poor in spirit" before he will follow Jesus?**

- 6. Why does a person need to seek after righteousness?**

- 7. How do we show our craving for righteousness?**

- 8. What do the consequences of sin have to do with our following Jesus?**

- 9. What does "mourning" have to do with our following Jesus?**

- 10. What is it about Jesus that causes men to want to follow Him?**

Lesson Six

"What Shall I Do With Jesus?"

The Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, asked the question of eternity! *"What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ?"* (Matt. 27:22). When Pilate gave the Jews an opportunity to choose either Barabbas or Jesus, they chose Barabbas! It was then that Pilate, at his wits end not knowing what else to do; that he ask the people what should be done with Jesus. He, himself, did not believe Him to be the Christ, but he did recognize that He was innocent of the accusations laid against Him. He tried to be neutral, and that didn't work. He, then, tried to place the responsibility upon others for Jesus' death. But Pilate's decision concerning Jesus was not his alone. It is a universal and personal decision that all men need to be faced with. It is the greatest decision that a person will ever make because this decision determines his eternal destiny!

Matt. 16:16 _____

Matt. 10:32-33 _____

Phil. 2:11 _____

OTHERS WHO FACED THIS DECISION

- 1. The Jewish Mob (Matt. 27:17, 22).** The mob of people was following blindly their prejudiced leaders. When they were asked the question, their answer was: *"Crucify Him, Crucify Him!"* They evidently believed Him to be an imposter.
- 2. Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:3-4).** Whatever Judas' motive was for betraying Jesus to the mob, he came to his senses enough to realize that he had betrayed innocent blood. Satan had gained a foothold in his heart and used it to bring about Jesus' betrayal and death.
- 3. Disciples of Jesus (John 6:66).** When Jesus could see that many were following Him for the food He gave them, He began to teach some "hard sayings." This caused many of the disciples to turn and walk no more with Him.
- 4. Felix (Acts 24:25).** The Apostle Paul had been imprisoned at Jerusalem and later sent to Caesarea where he remained for about two years. While there, he was brought before Felix and preached Jesus to him. Even though he "trembled" at the preaching of Paul, he was unwilling to accept the offer to follow Jesus. Since Jesus said: *"He that is not for me is against me."*; this action could be taken as a rejection of Jesus. It may not be a final rejection, but it is a rejection at that time.
- 5. Jewish people on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22-24, 36-37).** The Apostle Peter preached to the thousands of Jews who had gathered in the Temple area. When faced with the question: What will you do with Jesus?;

at least 3,000 of them were cut to their hearts, wanted to know what to do; and were told what was required of them.

Acts 2:38-40 _____

They gladly received the offer of Salvation through Jesus by believing the message, willingness to repent, and being immersed in water so that their sins could be forgiven (Acts 2:41).

A UNIVERSAL QUESTION!

All men today need to deal with this question. The reasons are easily seen in the claims that Jesus made:

- 1. He claimed to be God's Son—Deity!**
Mark 14:61-62 _____

- 2. He claimed to be God's Spokesman for the world in this present age.** **Heb. 1:1** _____

- 3. He claimed to be man's only Mediator to God.**
1 Tim. 2:5 _____

- 4. He claimed that Salvation is only in His Name.**
Acts 4:12 _____

It would seem logical that a responsible person cannot afford to ignore Him. He is either who and what He claims or a gross imposter. We either will bow before him exclaiming, "*My Lord and my God!*"; or, cry, as did the Jews, "*Crucify Him, Crucify Him!*" Is there any other alternative?

RESPONSIBLE ACCEPTANCE

What is involved if we accept Him? Jesus never wanted disciples under false pretense. God wants us to accept His Son, but we must be willing to pay the cost. Acceptance will bring:

- a) Salvation from sin and its just punishment;
- b) Newness of life—to start over fresh and clean;
- c) To be a child of God, an heir of God, with hope of eternal life;
- d) And that we can escape everlasting punishment.

What does the Lord expect of us?

- a) To be faithful unto Him until death (Rev. 2:10);
- b) To worship Him faithfully with His people (Heb. 10:25);
- c) To continue in prayer and the study of His Word (Acts 2:42);

- d) To maintain purity of life (Matt. 5:8);
- e) To be dedicated to Him first and foremost before all others (Matt. 6:33);
- f) To be loyal to His great Cause (Matt. 28:19);
- g) To show courage and zeal in service to God (1 Cor. 15:58);
- h) And to deny our desires and follow His desires for us (Matt. 16:24).

Some day the question will be changed. Now, Christ let's us make our decision about Him. In Judgment, he then will be considering what He will do with us!

Rev. 20:12_____

His actions will be determined by what we have done with him, here and now.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Jewish mob, with their leaders, chose Barabbas over Jesus! If you had been there, which would you have chosen? Did you say: *"I never would have chosen a murderer over Christ."* But what have you done with Jesus up to this point—accepted Him or denied Him?

A young man lived with his parents in New York city. His continual bad actions were a source of grief to his parents. As the young man was ready to go out to meet his evil companions, his father pleaded with him to stay home. He got down on his knees and begged him to not go out. But all his pleading was in vain. As a desperate effort, the father fell down in front of him to stop him. The boy just walked over him and went out the door. *"Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?"* (Heb. 10:29).

Christ has humbled Himself before us as He died on the cross! He is trying to prevent us from being lost forever. Will we walk over Him and go our own way too? Or, will we humbly surrender to His Will today?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. What had Barabbas done that caused the people to choose Him and not Jesus?**

- 2. Why didn't Pilate release Jesus if he believed him to be innocent?**

- 3. Why did the Jewish Mob want Jesus crucified?**

- 4. Why did some of Jesus' disciples walk no more with Him as stated in John 6?**

- 5. How did the Jewish people on Pentecost show their acceptance of Jesus?**

- 6. What claims are made about Jesus that should demand our sincere examination?**

- 7. What are some things that God has a right to expect of His children?**

- 8. What will be Jesus' answer to the question: "What will He do with me?"**

- 9. How does one trample underfoot the Son of God?**

