

## CHAPTER 3

### CHRIST -- OUR ANSWER

Have you ever wondered why the Bible was written and given to man? Was it simply to give us a sketch of history? Why then all the history about one nation--the nation of Israel? Why all the chronologies of kings and the people of Israel? The Bible was not written to give us a sketch of history.

Was it written then to give us a moral code to live by? Certainly, the Bible gives us a moral code, but it is one which is far greater than any man could keep. The nation of Israel felt that they could keep this code and three times state, "all that the Lord has spoken we will do." God then gave them 630 commandments and 1220 laws.

We often think of the first ten commandments and feel we should keep only these commands. However, the Bible points out that the laws of God are a unit. If we are going to establish our righteousness by keeping the first ten commandments, then we have a responsibility to follow all the commandments--all 630 of them.

Just forty days after Israel had pledged to do all that God commanded them to do, they broke nearly every law He gave. If you would desire to read that account of their failure, it is recorded in Exodus chapter 32.

If the Old Testament demonstrates anything, it demonstrates that man is unable to establish his righteousness by his own efforts. Thus the Bible is not written just give us a moral code.

The Bible does point out clearly in both the Old Testament and the New Testament the need for a Redeemer. In the Old Testament, there are over three hundred prophecies of the coming of One who would be that Redeemer.

What do we mean by a "Redeemer"? In the Greek New Testament, there are two words which are translated by the English words "to redeem." Both words denote the purchasing of a slave with the view of giving him his freedom. Spiritually, this is used of Christ in redeeming men from the penalty of their sins. He paid the price of our sin which was death. He died on the cross so that we might not have to die eternally.

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Two verses found at the end of the book of John could be placed at the close of the Bible, for these are fitting verses for the purpose of the entire Bible. They read as follows:

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son God; and that believing you might have life through His name." (John 20:30-31).

One could say there are many historical accounts which happened; many scientific facts know to man, and many moral issues we face which are not recorded in this book; but these are recorded that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, we might have life through His name.

All of the Old Testament then becomes a sign-post to point the way to Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind. The four gospels are accounts of the life of this Redeemer among men; stating "Here He is." The rest of the New Testament points back to our Redeemer as the answer to man's need for eternal life.

Let's find out about Jesus Christ then. Many think of Him as the baby born in the manger of Bethlehem who died on the cross for us at Jerusalem. He was this, but He is so much more!

According to the scriptures, He is the eternal Son God. Turn in your Bible to John's gospel, chapter 1. Read the first 18 verses. As you read, look for the identity of the One called "the Word." Note particularly verses 14 and 18.

It is evident that "the Word" is a person. If you still have your Bible open, note verse 3, "all things were made by Him." That is, He was involved in creation. Also in verse 14, it states "the Word was made flesh," that is, the "Word" entered into the human race as He came to dwell among us. Also in that same verse, it speaks of Him having "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Once again, the phrase "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the father" is used in verse 18. Then in John 1:34, John the Baptist bears witness that "this is the Son God." This, of course, is Jesus Christ.

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The central figure throughout this passage of scripture is Jesus Christ; no matter whether He is call "the Word," "the only begotten of the Father," or the "Son of God."

Looking back at John 1:1, it is Jesus Christ who was "in the beginning," that is, in eternity past. Before Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, He existed with God the Father; for the "Word was with God." Not only is that true, but the "Word **was** God." that is, everything God the Father is, so is the Son. This has been true from the beginning. Before time began, before the worlds were created, both God the Father and God the Son existed; inhabiting eternity.

Now please look up the next three groups of scriptures. They are passages of scripture which identify Jesus with the title "God," the characteristics of God and the words of God. I would suggest you read the verses before and after the scriptures listed so you might see the context of each verse.

#### Reference Group Number 2

a. Divine names are given to Christ.

- |                 |             |  |
|-----------------|-------------|--|
| 1. "God"        | Hebrews 1:8 | (Here He is compared to angels.)   |
| 2. "Great God"  | Titus 2:13  | (Jesus Christ is called Great God and our Savior.)                       |
| 3. "True God"   | 1 John 5:20 |  |
| 4. "Mighty God" | Isaiah 9:6  | (Note a child is born who shall have as one of His names, "Mighty God.") |

#### Reference Group Number 3

b. Divine characteristics are ascribed to Christ

- |                              |                |                        |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. He is eternal.            | Isaiah 9:6     | ("Everlasting Father") |
| 2. He is everywhere present. | Matthew 18:20  |                        |
| 3. He knows all things       | Colossians 2:3 |                        |
| 4. He is all powerful.       | Matthew 28:18  |                        |

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|------------------------|--------------|
| 5. He is holy          | Acts 3:13-14 |
| 6. He is righteous.    | 1 John 2:1   |
| 7. He is unchangeable. | Hebrews 13:8 |

#### Reference Group Number 4

- c. Divine works are wrought by Christ.
1. He creates Colossians 1:16 (Note end of vs. 13 for person it is talking about.)
  2. He sustains Colossians 1:17
  3. He forgives sins. Luke 5:21-25
  4. He raised the dead John 11:24-25 cf. 43-44

This list is not exhaustive. Many other scripture references could have been used. These are used to simply demonstrate the truths asserted.

The verses you have just finished examining are verses which demonstrate that Jesus Christ was God. But He also was man. He was clothes with the human flesh and entered into the human race. This He did through the process of the Virgin Birth. In both the books of Matthew and Luke, it tells in detail of the miraculous birth of Christ.

Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus. In fact, when he heard of Mary's pregnancy he was troubled and needed the assurance which only an angel of the Lord could give. In Luke's gospel, we have the detailed account of the miraculous conception.

Look up the Reference Groups Number 5 and 6. Group 6 tells of some of the human characteristics of Jesus.

#### Reference Group Number 5

2. He became the Son of Man
  - a. Jesus became a man
    1. Philippians 2:5-8 (Tells of His equality with God, but He humbled Himself to be man.)

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2. Luke 1:26-35 (Note: Mary is surprised and afraid she is reassured by the angel.)
3. Matthew 1:18-25 (This account gives Joseph's reaction to the news of the coming birth.)
  - b. Jesus had all the natural characteristics of a man.

#### Reference Group Number 6

1. He began his earthly life as a baby Luke 2:5-7
2. He grew and developed. Luke 2:40
3. He had emotions. John 11:35
4. He had normal appetites. John 19:28
5. He demonstrated his humanity by His suffering and death Matthew 17:27-50

We might believe that Jesus was God who came to earth to reveal Himself to man. Others have believed this about other great men. Is there any proof that Jesus was what He claimed to be or what His disciples claimed Him to be?

There are eleven major religions in the world today. Of these eleven, only four of them follow a man. Of these four men, only one claimed to equal with God. This one was Jesus of Nazareth. He told his disciples that they should only look for one main sign: the sign of His resurrection from the dead.

Jesus predicted no less than seven times that He would rise from the dead. He not only taught His disciples and the skeptics of His resurrection, but He also predicted the very day He should arise from the grave. On five occasions, He told them it would happen the third day following His burial. On one occasion, the Lord told his disciples just how He would be mocked, and scourged, and crucified before He faced His accusers!

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The resurrection becomes singularly the most important event in the testimony of the four gospel writers. Only Matthew and Luke felt it was important enough to tell us the birth of Jesus, but all four gospel writers tell in detail of events of the resurrection.

The New Testament mentions directly the resurrection of Jesus Christ 104 times. The entire sermon Peter preached in Jerusalem just fifty days after the crucifixion of Christ was centered around the fact of the resurrection of Christ. Thus, he states, "This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Many of the Jewish believers who had come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, at which time Christ was crucified, had stayed over to keep the feast of Pentecost. They had seen and heard the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. Now, Peter was preaching the truth of God's power being manifest in their midst by Christ's resurrection.

The preaching of Peter was directed to these Jewish worshippers when he said of Christ, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Once again he asserted "that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." In the face of this direct confrontation, three thousand of them were so convinced of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus that they committed their lives to Christ as their Savior.

Let's look up some of the scriptures we have mentioned in relation to the resurrection.

#### Reference Group number 7

Matthew 12:38-40

Mark 9:31

Matthew 17:22-23

John 2:19-21

Matthew 20:17-19

John 16:16

Matthew 26:32

#### Self-Check Number 1

(Underline the correct answers.)

1. The Bible was given to (a) give us a history of man, (b) give us a moral code, (c) tell us of a Redeemer.

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2. Jesus' existence (a) began when He was born of the Virgin Mary, (b) He always existed with God the Father, (c) it began when He was baptized by John the Baptist.
3. Jesus is (a) God only, (b) both God and man, (c) man only.
4. Which book (or books) tell us about the resurrection of Christ?  
(a) Matthew, (b) Mark, (c) Luke, (d) John  
(see answers in Outline and Study Guide 4)

In John 20:30-31, it says:

"And many others signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name."

Even though the version of the Bible you have may vary some from this reading, please do note that there are two reasons for the writing of John's gospel. (1) He wanted us to know and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and (2) He wanted us to believe so that we might have eternal life through His name.

I know of many people who believe that Jesus is the Christ. They believe everything that is written the Bible, but they do not know whether they have eternal life or not. God did not record all these facts so that we might simply have a head-knowledge of what He had done. He wants us to have the eternal life He has to offer. This life is in His Son, Jesus Christ. If we have received Him as our Savior, then we have eternal life.

Read the verses in Reference Group Number 8.

I John 5:11-13 (this is different than John's gospel)  
Romans 10:8-13

Keep your Bible open to Romans 10:8-13. Did you notice the phrase in I John which stated "these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son God, that you may know that you have eternal life..." God wants us to know we have eternal life. Unfortunately, many people, when faced with death, are simply taking a leap in the dark. They are at best

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"hoping" to come out all right. But God wants us to know for sure that we have eternal life in Christ.

How can we know for sure? Now look at Romans 10:8-13. In this passage, we find three steps to eternal life in Christ.

First of all, a person must believe that Jesus Christ did, in fact, resurrect from the dead. This must be a heart-felt conviction. In other words, a person must believe the record of the Bible is true. This is intellectual assent. In the 10th verse, it states confession is made unto salvation. Now, it is well-known that a person might say anything with his mouth. But, in this case, the heart must believe what the mouth confesses.

How can a person confess salvation and know for sure it is true? that is where step two takes place. In verse 13, it states "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." between the heart-belief and the mouth-confession, a person must call upon Christ to save him. in other words, he must believe that Christ can save him if anyone can and actually call upon Christ to save him. This is personal appropriation. The reason we need to call upon Christ is because of our sin. We cannot save ourselves. We need to admit this. This is called the confession of our sin. It is not necessary at this point to name every sin. Simply acknowledge your helplessness without Christ. Then personally invite Christ to come into your life.

The third step is natural. It involves a personal commitment. We will want to tell others that we have received Christ as our Savior. Note the last part of verse 11. "Whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed."

Bard Marshall states: In my own life, this has happened. I was raised in a little country church; but when I got into high school, I wanted to go my own way. However, I knew I should commit my life to Jesus Christ. I was able to push the decision off until my senior. At that time, I was wrestling for the Oregon City High School. I wanted to be a State champion more than anything else. I became so concerned about it that I began bargaining with God before each match. I would pray, "Lord, if you'll make me a champion, I'll be a Christian." It seemed to work, because I never lost a match my senior year. Then just before the State matches, I broke out with thirteen boils on my right leg. Needless to say, I didn't win the State



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championship. All my dreams went out the window. When you're a senior, there are no more chances.

For the entire month of March, I felt God had let me down. In reality, I had let Him down. On the last Sunday of the month of March, the Pastor spoke of a "broadway" that leads to destruction and a narrow way that leads to life. All afternoon, I thought about the message. As my friend and I drove down Broadway in Portland, he pointed out, "Bard, we'll never make it because we're on the Broadway!" That pierced my heart like an arrow.

That night, I went to that little church to settle my account with Christ. There was no one there to play the little pump organ, so they called on me to play for the closing hymn. As the people sang I began to ask myself, "What will people think if I ask the Pastor about being a Christian? What will the other kids think?" When the song was over, I had made up my mind not to do anything that night. But as I got up to leave the organ, one of the men came up to me and said, "Bard, you played it like you meant it!" That did it for me. I walked right over to the Pastor and asked him how I could become a Christian. I later prayed and invited Christ into my life.

I have failed Him many times since then, but one thing I am sure about--Christ gave me eternal life that night, and my life has been different from that day until now.

If you have never invited Christ to come into your life, do so right now. God is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. If you are sincere about having Him in your life, simply confess your sinfulness to Him and your need of his salvation.

Pray in this way. "Lord Jesus, I believe you died for me, I now open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Help me to be the kind of person You want me to be. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."

If you prayed this prayer, tell someone who is believer the next time you see them or contact the church at: 503 434 5541. There is nothing in the world will make him happier. He then will be able to rejoice with you. May God richly bless you.

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