

*Unit Seven*

*The Person of Christ*

*Annotated Lesson*

*Outlines*

**Journey through the Bible**  
*Annotated Lesson Outlines*

Unit Seven: The Person of Christ

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# Overview of Lessons

## *Unit 7. The Person of Christ (Matthew–John [1])*

This unit discusses the person of Christ as revealed in the four Gospels.

**Lesson 1: Christ, the Reality of the Pictures in Scripture**—The entire Bible is a book about Christ. In the Old Testament, Christ is portrayed in many types, figures, and shadows, which are pictures of Him. In the New Testament, Christ came as the reality of all these pictures. If we see the relationship between the pictures in the Old Testament and their definition in the New Testament, we will be helped to see Christ in the entire Scripture. Christ is the reality of all the positive pictures in the Old Testament, and Christ defines and explains these pictures. When we read the Bible in a proper way, we can see Christ in every page, and by seeing the pictures in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in Christ, we are helped to know our unsearchably rich Christ. **Objective:** To see that the entire Bible is a book of Christ and that Christ is the fulfillment of all the positive types and figures in the Old Testament. **Crucial Matters:** Knowing the typology of the Old Testament (I.D.); Knowing that the entire Bible is concerning Christ (II.F.2.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew 1.

**Lesson 2: Christ, the Fulfillment of the Promises in Scripture**—The entire Bible focuses upon Christ, including the Old Testament, in which He is prefigured and prophesied. The prophecies concerning Christ encouraged God's seekers through their long wait and gave them a portrait of the One they were waiting for. When Christ came, He fulfilled in every detail all the prophecies made concerning Him. The ability of people to recognize this and receive Him, however, depended upon the condition of their heart. Those who love Him pay close attention to every detail of prophecy, to insure that they will be prepared for Him when He comes. **Objective:** To see how the prophecies were fulfilled in Christ and how the prophecies prepare us to receive Christ. **Crucial Matters:** Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God (II.F.1.); Knowing that the entire Bible is concerning Christ (II.F.2.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew 2–3.

**Lesson 3: Christ as the King-Savior**—Matthew's biography of Christ is from a particular perspective, showing that Christ is the King, the Christ of God prophesied in the Old Testament, who brings the kingdom of the heavens to the earth. Christ's genealogy proves that He is of the royal line and a legal heir to the throne. Christ's birth and youth show that, even in His early years, He was worshipped as the King by the magi, and hunted as the King by Herod. Christ's ministry on earth was for the sake of bringing man into His kingdom and Christ's death and resurrection cleared the way for all of us to become His kingdom people. He is the King-Savior, and from His birth all the way to His resurrection, Christ is working to establish His kingdom on earth. Matthew begins the entire New Testament with the arrival of such a King whose salvation ushers us out of our fallen condition and makes us kingdom people with a kingdom life. **Objective:** To help the young people see that in the Gospel of Matthew, Christ is the King-Savior, coming to save sinners and bring them into His kingdom. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew 1–28.



**Lesson 4: Christ as the Slave-Savior**—In Mark's biography of Christ, Christ is presented not as a noble King, but as a lowly Slave. He is a Slave coming not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). For this reason, Mark's Gospel takes on a very different perspective from Matthew's Gospel. Rather than presenting us with Christ's wonderful words, Mark's intention is to impress us with His excellent deeds. It is the deeds of a slave that are important, not his words. Therefore, Mark presents vivid detail of the different actions that the Lord took on behalf of sinners in order to bring them into God's purpose. He was prophesied in Isaiah as the Servant of God and He is spoken of by Paul as the One who humbled Himself even unto death. He lowered Himself to the lowest estate, and as a slave He labored faithfully for God's purpose. No person is so lowly, so lovely, and so approachable as this slave of God who came to serve us for our salvation. **Objective:** To help the young people see that in the Gospel of Mark, Christ is the Slave-Savior serving sinners for God's plan. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II. C.). **Chapter(s):** Mark 1–16.

**Lesson 5: Christ as the Man-Savior**—The Gospel of Luke presents a full picture of the Lord Jesus as the only proper and normal man who ever lived on earth. As such a man, He is qualified to be the Savior of mankind. Luke's record of the life of Jesus impresses us with the completeness and perfection of His humanity. The Lord Jesus lived according to the highest standard of morality. As such a man, Jesus is the Savior of mankind. **Objective:** To present Luke's view of Christ our Savior as a genuine, proper, and normal man with the highest standard of morality. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Luke 1–24.

**Lesson 6: Christ as the God-Savior**—The Gospel of John reveals Christ as the God-Savior. In John, Christ is shown to be the very God in eternity past who stepped out of eternity into time in order to bring man into eternity with Him as His eternal counterpart and expression. In order to accomplish this, God had to become life to man. The Gospel of John reveals the process by which God did this. First, God became flesh. Second, God passed through death and imparted Himself into His believers as the Spirit in resurrection. These two "becomings" produced a corporate and organic entity which fulfills and satisfies God's eternal desire. Such a God-Savior meets every man's need by dispensing Himself into man as life. **Objective:** To show that the distinguishing characteristic of the Gospel of John is that Christ is revealed as the God-Savior to be life to His people. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** John 1, 20.

**Lesson 7: Christ in His Deity (1)**—Christ is God. His deity is eternal and absolute. From eternity past to eternity future He is God. He is the complete God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. As the Son of God, Christ embodies God to be God's expression, the effulgence of God's glory, and the express image of God's substance. **Objective:** To understand that Jesus Christ is, has been, and always will be God. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** John 1.

**Lesson 8: Christ in His Deity (2)**—In His deity, Christ is the Word (John 1:1) and the mystery of God (Col. 2:2) to define and explain God to us. As the Son of God who coinheres with the Father, Christ expresses and declares the Father. The dear,

only-begotten Son is continually in the bosom of the Father to declare Him and to bring us into the enjoyment of the Father. **Objective:** To understand that as the Word of God and Son of God, Christ embodies and expresses all that God is. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.); Knowing that God is Triune (II.A.1.). **Chapter(s):** John 1.

**Lesson 9: Christ in God's Economy**—God's economy, simply stated, is His plan to dispense Himself into His chosen people for the producing of the church. In such an economy, Christ does everything and is everything. In this lesson, we will see that in God's economy, Christ is four things: He is the Anointed One who carries out God's economy; He is the preeminent One who has the first place in God's economy; He is the Head of all things in God's economy; and He is the center of God's economy. No one can carry out God's economy except Christ. No one has preeminence in God's economy but Christ. No one heads up all things in the universe but Christ, and only He is the center of God's plan. For this reason, in God's economy, Christ is everything. May we all be like the apostle Paul who determined to know and experience nothing other than the all-inclusive and excellent Christ in God's economy (1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 3:8–10). **Objective:** To help the young people see that in God's economy, Christ is everything. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** John 1.

**Lesson 10: Christ in Creation**—Everything that exists in this universe can be classified under two main headings: the Creator and the creation. The Bible, in order to show us that Christ is everything, unveils that He is both the Creator and the Firstborn of all creation. How wonderful is our all-inclusive Christ! As God, He is the Creator of all things. All things were created in Him, through Him, and unto Him. He upholds all things by the word of His power and all things subsist together in Him. As man, He is the Firstborn of all creation and is thus the first among created things. He is both God and man; both the Creator and a creature. This is our Christ! **Objective:** To show how Christ in creation is both the Creator of all things and a creature. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Colossians 1.

**Lesson 11: Christ in Incarnation: God Manifested in the Flesh**—In the incarnation, Christ is God manifested in the flesh. He was manifested in the flesh not only as the Son but as the entire God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Through incarnation Christ became the God-man, the One who is the complete God and the perfect man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, having the divine essence, and He was born of a human virgin, having the human essence. In Him as the God-man, divinity and humanity were mingled together and God's purpose was fulfilled in a man. **Objective:** To understand that Christ was the embodiment of the entire Triune God and that in Him divinity and humanity were mingled in one Person. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew 1, Luke 2, John 1.

**Lesson 12: Christ in Incarnation: The Son of Man**—In Lesson 11 we saw that Christ in incarnation is the Son of God. Now we see that in His incarnation Christ also became the Son of Man, a genuine man who was limited by time and space just like us. For Christ to be both the Son of God and the Son of Man indicates that through His incarnation Christ



brought the infinite God into finite man. Through His incarnation He made God one with man and mingled divinity with humanity. In His incarnation, Christ also united and mingled the Triune God with the tripartite man. **Objective:** To show that through incarnation the Triune God has joined Himself to and mingled Himself with a genuine man. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew–John.

**Lesson 13: Christ in Incarnation: Jesus and Emmanuel**—Christ in His incarnation was given two wonderful names that reveal something marvelous about His Person. The name He received from God was *Jesus* which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Joshua, meaning “Jehovah the Savior” or “the salvation of Jehovah”. In this wonderful Person we have Jehovah, we have the Savior, we have salvation, and we have the real Joshua who is bringing us into Himself as the good land. The name that He received from men was *Emmanuel* which means “God with us.” Whenever we experience Jesus we have the sense that God is with us. May we all come to appreciate the Person of Christ who is not only a man, but Jehovah, and not only Jehovah, but Jehovah as our Savior, salvation, and Emmanuel, God with us. **Objective:** To help the young people appreciate the significance of Christ’s name in incarnation—Jesus (Jehovah the Savior) and *Emmanuel* (God with us). **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew 1.

**Lesson 14: Christ’s Birth: Matthew’s Account**—Matthew begins his record of Christ’s birth by saying, “Now the origin of Jesus Christ was in this way...” (Matt. 1:18a). No man has ever had an origin like the origin of Jesus Christ. In His sovereignty, God brought Mary and Joseph together in marriage for the bringing forth of Christ. Both of them were the right persons to provide a proper genealogy for Christ and both of them paid a high price to bring Christ forth. Regarding Christ’s birth, Matthew says that Mary “was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:18). This means that Jesus Christ was conceived directly of the Holy Spirit to have the divine essence. He was born of a human virgin to have the human essence. In this way, Christ was a God-man possessing both divinity and humanity. The One who was born in this way was called Jesus (Jehovah the Savior) and Emmanuel (God with us). He is Jehovah, He is God, and He is the prophesied King who has come to bring the kingdom of the heavens to earth. **Objective:** To show the young people how the birth of Christ was prepared by God’s sovereignty and carried out through the Holy Spirit for the producing of a God-man. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew 1.

**Lesson 15: Christ’s Birth: Luke’s Account**—Many believers are familiar with Luke’s account of the birth of Christ and acknowledge His birth as a great thing, but few are clear why it was so great. As we consider the conception and birth of Christ, it becomes strikingly evident that Christ’s birth was the birth of a God-man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit to have the divine essence and He was born of a human virgin to have the human essence. As a result, Christ is a Person of two sources and two essences, making Him a God-man who is both the complete God and the perfect man. He was born in the city of Bethlehem and then laid in a manger where He began His life in the lowest estate. Nevertheless, the little baby in the manger was “the mighty God” (Isa. 9:6). May we all come to appreciate Christ’s birth as the birth of a God-man. **Objective:** To impress the young people with Luke’s account of the birth of a most wonderful and excellent person, a God-man who is both the complete God and the perfect man. **Crucial Matters:**



Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Luke 1–2.

**Lesson 16: Christ's Infancy and Youth**—Matthew 2 and Luke 2 present the story of the Lord Jesus' infancy and youth. These chapters show us that although Christ was the infinite God, He was also a real man who had to grow and develop in a normal way. As a finite man, He had to pass through the stages of infancy, growth, development, and maturation as a human being. In Matthew 2 the Lord Jesus was sought and worshipped by the Gentile magi; He was envied by Herod; He was taken to Egypt; and He returned to dwell in Nazareth, being called a Nazarene. In Luke 2 He was circumcised, named, presented, and adored. Then He "grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke 2:40). As God, Jesus was omniscient, but as a man, He needed to grow in wisdom. Luke 2:41–52 especially show us the Lord's living as a youth and testifies that "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in the grace manifested in Him before God and men" (Luke 2:52). **Objective:** To use the facts concerning the Lord's infancy and youth to show that He was a real baby and a real boy, and that He grew up in a normal way as a man. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew 2; Luke 2.

**Lesson 17: Christ in His Human Living**—In His human living the Lord Jesus was the Son of Man, found in fashion as a man. As a despised Nazarene, He was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter. He took the form of a slave, serving God and men, and He was a faithful witness of God. As such a witness, He lived the life of a God-man, doing God's will, speaking God's word, and carrying out God's work. He lived divinity in humanity, and therefore expressed God in everything He was and in everything He said and did. **Objective:** To understand how Christ changed His place to become a man, and how He lived a life in humanity as a typical man. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Mark 10, John 12.

**Lesson 18: Christ's Divine Attributes and Human Virtues**—As a God-man, Christ possessed both the divine attributes and the human virtues. Attributes are what God is. For example, God is love and light, and He is righteous and holy. Man was created in the image of God, thus possessing virtues which correspond to the divine attributes. The human virtues are the "glove," whereas the divine attributes are the "hand" for which the glove was made. As God, Christ has the divine attributes; as man, He has the human virtues. In His living as the first God-man, the "hand" of the divine attributes was expressed in the "glove" of the human virtues. In His human virtue of compassion, for instance, He expressed the divine attribute of compassion. In His person He is the mingling of God and man; in His living He was the expression of the divine attributes in the human virtues. This was the kind of human life that God intended from the very beginning. **Objective:** To show that Christ's human living as a God-man was the expression of His divine attributes through His human virtues. **Crucial Matters:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.). **Chapter(s):** Matthew–John.



# Unit 7—The Person of Christ

## *Lesson 1—Christ, the Reality of the Pictures in Scripture*

**OBJECTIVE:** To see that the entire Bible is a book of Christ and that Christ is the fulfillment of all the positive types and figures in the Old Testament.

**SYNOPSIS:** The entire Bible is a book about Christ. In the Old Testament, Christ is portrayed in many types, figures, and shadows, which are pictures of Him. In the New Testament, Christ came as the reality of all these pictures. If we see the relationship between the pictures in the Old Testament and their definition in the New Testament, we will be helped to see Christ in the entire Scripture. Christ is the reality of all the positive pictures in the Old Testament, and Christ defines and explains these pictures. When we read the Bible in a proper way, we can see Christ in every page, and by seeing the pictures in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in Christ, we are helped to know our unsearchably rich Christ.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew 1.

### **OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:**

*This lesson (as well as the next) links the Old Testament with the New Testament, and introduces the subject of the six New Testament units—Christ!*

#### **I. The entire Bible is a book about Christ—John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44**

*In John 5:39 the Lord Jesus told the Pharisees that the Scriptures were a testimony concerning Him, and He indicated to them that when we read the Bible, we have to read it in a proper way. The entire Bible is a book about Christ, so the proper way to read the Bible is to look for Christ as we read it. In Luke 24, verses 27 and 44, the Lord expounded the Scriptures to two of His disciples to show them all the things written in the law of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets concerning Himself. The entire Old Testament Scripture is a book concerning Christ. The New Testament begins (Matt. 1:1) and ends (Rev. 22:21) with the name of Jesus Christ, “proving that Jesus Christ is the subject and content of the New Testament. The Bible is a book of life, and this life is a living person, the wonderful and all-inclusive Christ. The Old Testament gives a portrait, in types and prophecies, of this wonderful person as the Coming One. Now, in the New Testament, this wonderful person has come. The first page of the New Testament, in recommending this wonderful person to us, gives us His genealogy. This genealogy can be considered an abstract of the Old Testament, which in itself is the detailed genealogy of Christ. To understand the genealogy in Matthew, we need to trace the origin and history of every incident. Christ, as the wonderful center of the entire Bible, is all-inclusive, having many aspects” (Matt. 1:1, footnote 1). Christ is the center and focus of the entire Bible.*

#### **A. Thus, the best way to read the Bible is to look for Christ—John 5:39–40**

*The Lord Jesus told the Pharisees that when they searched the Scriptures they needed to come to Him (John 5:39–40). The Bible is a book of life, and to get life from the Scriptures, we have to come to Christ Himself when we read it. Furthermore, we have to read the Bible in a proper way. Since the Bible is about Christ, the best way to read the Bible is to look for Christ. People read the Bible for a lot of reasons. Some people consider it great literature.*

Others read it to receive comfort or to solve their problems. Still others read it to try to learn how to live a proper human life. However, we must realize that the Bible is not firstly about me, my situation, or my problems, but a book of Christ. The Bible is about a wonderful person and our involvement with this person. When we read the Old Testament stories, we should look for Christ, because He is the reality of the pictures portrayed there.

**B. Christ is portrayed in the Old Testament in many types, figures, and shadows**

The Journey through the Bible is a journey to pursue and appreciate the Person who is the center of the entire Scripture. When we come to read the Bible, we must look for Christ, since He is the center of the Bible. It is easy to see Christ in the New Testament, but how do we look for Christ when we are reading the Old Testament? Firstly, to find Christ in the Old Testament, we must see the connection between the pictures in the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Christ, the wonderful Person in the New Testament. In the New Testament, Christ is portrayed in plain words, but in the Old Testament, Christ is portrayed by many types, figures, and shadows which are pictures of Him. These pictures include types, which are persons or things that signify Christ; figures, which are situations that present a picture of Christ (such as Christ being our real Passover to save us out of the world); and shadows, which are rituals or practices that depict Christ (such as the Sabbath day, the eating rituals, the feasts, etc.). However, for simplicity's sake, this lesson mainly refers to the types of Christ.

**C. Christ in the New Testament is the reality of all these types, figures, and shadows—Matt. 1:1; Col. 2:17**

This person, who is the center of the New Testament, is the fulfillment of all the pictures in the Old Testament. This is why Paul says that Christ is the body of all the shadows (the pictures of Him—Col. 2:17).

**II. Christ is the reality of all the positive pictures in the Old Testament**

Christ is the reality of all the positive pictures in the Old Testament. All these pictures show us different aspects of our unsearchably rich Christ (Eph. 3:8). We have already covered many types of Christ in the course of our journey through the Bible. Christ is the real tree of life (Gen. 2:9) and the real Husband who will gain the church as the counterpart taken out of His side (Gen. 2:21–24). He is the Lamb who was sacrificed to be our substitute and who now covers us as our righteousness (Gen. 3:21). He is the real ark that saved Noah and his family from God's judgment (Gen. 6:14). He is the real Isaac who was obedient to the Father, even unto death, and He is also the ram who died as our substitute (Gen. 22:9, 13). As the real Isaac He will also take the church from among the human race to be His bride (Gen. 24:1–67). Christ is the real heavenly ladder that Jacob saw (Gen. 28:12; John 1:51). He is also the real Joseph, the One who was beloved of His Father but sold by His brothers, and the One who had the rich food supply to feed all the nations (Gen. 37:3, 28; 41:57). All of these items were covered in Unit 1. Furthermore, Christ is our Passover and our Passover lamb (Exo. 12:11). He is the manna that we eat (Exo. 16:15). He is the reality of the law as God's Testimony (Exo. 20:1–17) and the reality of the ark and the tabernacle (Exo. 25:8–10). He is all the offerings (Lev. 1–5), and He is the proper food for us to eat (Lev. 11). Christ is even the real Nazarite (Num. 6:2). All of these pictures of Christ were covered in Unit 2. Furthermore, in Deuteronomy, we see many aspects of Christ as our all-inclusive good land. This list could go on and on! Christ is so rich and



*all-inclusive that He needs thousands of pictures to show us all that He can be to us in so many aspects. It is hard to exhaust all the pictures of Christ in the Old Testament.*

**A. Christ defines and explains the types in the Old Testament—Matt. 1:1; Gal. 3:14**

*The pictures in the Old Testament are defined in the New Testament. For example, Abraham offered his son Isaac to God on Mount Moriah, and Isaac, in obedience to his father, went along willingly, even carrying the wood. In this story, Isaac is a type of Christ (See Lesson 15 of Unit 1). However, without Christ to define this type, it would only seem like a very interesting story to us. We do not understand this type until we come to the New Testament. In the Gospels we see how Christ willingly went to the cross (Matt. 16:21; 26:1–2) according to the Father’s will (Matt. 26:39–42) to die for us on Mount Moriah (where Golgotha was; Matt. 27:33). He even carried the wood on which He was to be offered (John 19:17)! Thus Christ as the reality of the son of Abraham is the definition of the Old Testament type, and He showed us what the Old Testament picture was about. After Abraham had offered Isaac in this way, God promised him that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:18). Thus, when Christ was introduced in Matthew 1:1 as the “son of Abraham,” it also means that He is the One in whom God’s blessing would come to all the nations of the earth, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14). The full significance of this type is not realized until we read Paul’s epistles! Thus Christ is the definition of all the pictures of Him in the Old Testament.*

**B. The life of Christ reminds us of the types—Matt. 1:1; 2 Sam. 7:12–14a; John 1:29**

*As we view the life of Christ as portrayed in the Gospels, everything is much more significant to us when we are familiar with the pictures in the Old Testament. For example, He is introduced in Matthew 1:1 as “the son of David” (cf. Mark 10:47). Right away we should realize that He is the One who will inherit the throne of David, who will build God a house, and whose kingdom will be established forever and ever (2 Sam. 7:12–13). In the Gospel of John, Christ is introduced as “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29). This reminds us of the Passover lamb and becomes so meaningful to us when we realize its significance for our redemption. Similarly, many things in the life of Christ remind us of the Old Testament pictures and become so significant to us because of it.*

**C. Through the types, we get many details concerning Christ that we could not otherwise know**

*Without the pictures in the Old Testament, there are many things about Christ we could never understand. For example, Paul tells us that Christ is unsearchably rich (Eph. 3:8). Yet without the type of the good land, how could we know what “all-inclusive” means? Such things are difficult to express in words, yet the picture is “worth a thousand words.” The story of Isaac’s fellowship with his father in Genesis 22 on the way up to Mount Moriah is another example of details that are not found in the New Testament. Surely Christ fellowshiped with His Father on His way to be crucified, but the New Testament gives us no record in plain words. However, in Genesis 22, we have a beautiful picture of the fellowship between Christ and His Father.*

**III. By learning to see the pictures of Christ in the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Christ, we are helped to know our unsearchably rich Christ—Eph. 3:8**

*The entire Bible is a book of Christ. The Old Testament is full of pictures of Christ, and Christ is the reality and fulfillment of all these pictures. When we read the Bible in a proper way, we can see Christ throughout every book.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** The Old Testament is like the blueprint for a house. The blueprint gives many details concerning the house, and shows what the house will be like. However, the blueprint is not the “real thing,” and no one would be satisfied with just a blueprint. Furthermore, if you only have the blueprint it is hard to imagine exactly how the final product will look. Christ in the New Testament is like the house. When we have Him, we have everything. Yet even after a house is built, to understand its structure and design, you still may need to refer to the blueprint. In the same way, now that Christ has come, we still need to refer back to the pictures of Him in the Old Testament in order to apprehend all the riches of our Christ (Eph. 3:8, 18).

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29b)!” These words were proclaimed in delight by John the Baptist when he saw the Lord Jesus coming as the reality and fulfillment of all the Old Testament offerings. In his declaration John may have recalled the first offering provided by God after man’s fall (Gen. 3:21), where Adam and Eve might have witnessed a lamb being slain by God to cover their sin and bear its penalty—death (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23a). Recalling the countless animals offered year after year by the children of Israel (always serving to cover but never able to cleanse their sins), he must have been filled with appreciation that, after so long a time, the reality had come to replace the picture! John the Baptist recognized and appreciated the Lord Jesus as the real Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world and to suffer death for us, the ones on whom the punishment of death should rightly fall. Now, we too should appreciate this Lamb of God. By believing into Him, our sins are washed away and we are saved from sin’s penalty of death. Be cleansed and saved by believing in your heart, repenting of your sins, and calling on the name of Jesus (Rom. 10:9, 13) to receive Him as the Lamb of God and the reality of every positive thing in the universe! Receive Him and receive the reality (John 14:6)!

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Knowing the typology of the Old Testament (I.D.); Knowing that the entire Bible is concerning Christ (II.F.2.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Messages 41–43.

**REFERENCES:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Messages 41–45; *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 1, pp. 1–2; Matthew 1:1, footnote 1.



## Lesson 2—Christ, the Fulfillment of the Promises in Scripture

**OBJECTIVE:** To see how the prophecies were fulfilled in Christ and how the prophecies prepare us to receive Christ.

**SYNOPSIS:** The entire Bible focuses upon Christ, including the Old Testament, in which He is prefigured and prophesied. The prophecies concerning Christ encouraged God's seekers through their long wait and gave them a portrait of the One they were waiting for. When Christ came, He fulfilled in every detail all the prophecies made concerning Him. The ability of people to recognize this and receive Him, however, depended upon the condition of their heart. Those who love Him pay close attention to every detail of prophecy, to insure that they will be prepared for Him when He comes.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew 2–3.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*Along with the previous lesson, this lesson shows how Christ is the focus of both the Old and New Testaments, and that in Him the two are linked.*

#### I. The prophecies indicate that the entire Bible was written with Christ in view— Heb. 10:7; Luke 24:25–27; John 1:45; 5:39

*Most people realize that Christ is the focus of the New Testament, but not many realize that Christ is also the focus of the Old Testament. The types in the Old Testament addressed in the previous lesson are one proof of this. Another proof that the Old Testament is focused on Christ are the prophecies. Time and time again, the Scriptures foretell of a Person who is coming to recover man back to God for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. This One is referred to as "Messiah" (from the Hebrew) and as "Christ" (from the Greek), both of which mean "the Anointed One" (i.e., the One chosen and qualified by God to recover the relationship God intended to have with man in His plan). The prophecies which do not speak of Christ Himself refer to what God had to do to prepare the world situation for Christ's coming. Thus, the Old Testament reveals that all events in history, from Adam onward, were a preparation for Christ. In fact, today God is still arranging all things to fulfill what is foretold in the Scriptures to prepare the way for Christ's second coming!*

#### A. The Old Testament prophecies functioned to encourage God's seekers through their long wait as God worked to fulfill all the many things necessary for the Anointed One's coming—Rom. 15:4; Gal. 4:4; Mark 1:14–15

*If God's chosen people had had only the types without the prophecies, they would have lacked the encouragement needed to endure so many discouraging situations. Sometimes a parent must explain to a child a goal and the process necessary to reach that goal, so that the child will be willing to endure the process. The children of Israel needed the prophecies to make their wait bearable, as well as to be a kind of photograph given beforehand so that they might recognize Christ when He came. These prophecies must have shown forth like bright lights to God's seekers. By the time Christ came, the glory of Israel's past lay in the dust, and the good land was ruled by a people (the Romans) who did not recognize the God of Israel. Four thousand years' worth of sin, sickness, and failure had dimmed the hope of many. In spite of all of this, the Lord still found some watching and waiting, ready to*

receive Him (as in Luke 2:25–32). Some still kept their hope alive through the prophecies, even after so much time had passed. Will we be those waiting and watching for Him when He appears again?

**B. The Old Testament prophecies functioned to give God's seekers a picture of the marvelous Anointed One they were waiting for—1 Pet. 1:10–11; Psa. 40:7**

God did not give Jesus' full biography in any one book of the Old Testament. Instead, He released the details concerning Christ here and there throughout the Scriptures. Thus, the Old Testament is sprinkled throughout with pieces of a picture of Christ which fit together like a puzzle. When put together, they present a recognizable picture of a life. Christ, being so precious, had to be found by searching out and seeking. In this way, He could come to be received by those who really cared for Him.

**II. Christ came exactly as foretold and fulfilled all the prophecies concerning Him**

**A. The prophecies made concerning Christ painted a recognizable picture**

The first prophecy in the Bible is concerning Christ. In Genesis 3:15 God promised that the "seed of the woman" would crush the serpent's (Satan's) head. Eve mistakenly thought that her first child was that Promised One, but the real seed of the woman was Jesus, who was born of a virgin as the real seed of woman (Isa. 7:14). It was further promised that this seed would come through Abraham (Gal. 3:16). Therefore, the Coming One would be of the Jews, but He would not be for the Jews alone. In this seed of Abraham's, all the nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3)! The Old Testament also foretold that Christ would come, more specifically, from the tribe of Judah as one of David's descendants (2 Sam. 7:12–14; Psa. 89:3; Matt. 1:1). The place of His birth would be Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), yet He would be called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23) a switch made purposely which confused those who only knew the prophecies in an outward way (Matt. 2:1–6; John 1:46; 7:41–43). Although He was Immanuel, God with us (Isa. 7:14), and even the very Mighty God and Eternal Father (Isa. 9:6), He would grow up unappreciated, surrounded by human misery, not possessing any outward form or comeliness (Isa. 53:2–3). He would be rejected by those He came to save (Isa. 53:3–4, 7–8; Psa. 22:6–8) and betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12). He would die on a cross to pay the price for our sins and to remove our curse (Isa. 53:10; Psa. 22:16–18; Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13–14; Acts 13:29; 1 Cor. 15:3). He would be buried among the rich, though killed as a criminal (Isa. 53:9). He would die in the 483rd year after the official decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Dan. 9:25–26; see Unit 6, Lesson 16). He would be resurrected from the dead, and in resurrection He would be satisfied with a seed as His multiplication and increase (Isa. 53:10–11; 1 Cor. 15:4). He would be exalted by God (Psa. 118:22; 110:1; Isa. 53:12), and spoken of to generations not yet born (Psa. 22:30–31), even unto all the nations (Isa. 11:10). There are many other prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament, and the serving ones are encouraged to review the messages in The Conclusion to the New Testament referenced at the end of this lesson. Instead of going into great detail on one or two prophecies, however, try to piece together a picture of a life from the prophecies as done above.

**B. The fulfillment of the prophecies prove that the Bible is God's word**

The fulfillment of all the prophecies should strengthen our conviction that the Bible is the word of God, for only God can write of the future as if it were the present or the past.



### III. How the prophecies are received by us depends upon our heart—Eph. 1:18; Heb. 6:12

*Despite the clear picture of Christ portrayed in the Word, many missed Christ at His coming, and many today still are unable or unwilling to recognize Him as the One in whom the Scriptures are fulfilled. Such people are blinded by Satan, lest Christ should shine into their hearts (2 Cor. 4:3–4). Some even beat and killed the prophets who came speaking concerning Him (Matt 23:37; Mark 12:5–7). Even after His disciples witnessed His accomplishments, Christ still had to open their minds to see how it was that the Scriptures were fulfilled in Him (Luke 24:25–27, 44–47). Only after they thus had a clear view of Him in the Word could He charge them to be His witnesses (Luke 24:48–49). This indicates that we need to see Christ in the Scriptures before we can effectively be His witnesses. The record in Acts indicates that prophecy played an important part in the preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:30–35; 3:18–19; 7:48–52; 8:28–35; 10:43; 13:22–41; 17:2–3, 10–11; 18:28; 26:22–23, 27–28). How the word was received, however, depended upon the listeners' hearts.*

#### A. Those who love Christ yearn for His appearing and search out what manner of time Christ will appear—1 Pet. 1:10–11

*The prophecies are vital to those who love Christ. Just as someone awaiting a loved one seeks out any scrap of information regarding how and when that one will arrive, we should dive into the prophecies concerning Christ. He came the first time just as the Bible said He would; therefore we can know that He will come the second time just as the Bible says He will. When He came the first time, only those who were watching in a daily and detailed way were ready for Him when He arrived. Those who knew the prophecies in a general way missed Him (John 7:42–43). Therefore we should search out the prophecies for every clue so that we will really be ready for Him when He appears. Praise the Lord that these prophecies have been fully interpreted and delivered unto us!*

#### B. In order to enjoy Christ as the morning star and to enter into His kingdom, we must be those faithful to keep the prophetic word fresh in our hearts—2 Pet. 1:18; Rev. 2:28

*If we love the Lord, we will be those who love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8), and we will spontaneously yearn after Him and watch for Him as for the morning star. Therefore we need to ask the Lord to draw us until His coming becomes our yearning. As a young Christian, Watchman Nee struggled with something else that claimed his affections, but by the Lord's mercy he could eventually say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides Thee" (Psa. 73:25). Thus, in his hymns on the Lord's return (Hymns #958, #959, and #960), you can really sense the fragrance of a lover's heart. If we have such a heart, the prophecies will encourage us and help preserve us for the Lord's appearing. Will we be those whom He will find watching (Matt. 24:42–44)?*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** When Christ came to earth the first time in His incarnation, many knew that He was to be born in Bethlehem, and that He would be born as a descendant of David. In fact, the Old Testament reveals many details about who Christ would be and how He would come, yet few received Him in spite of all of this. This lesson could be set in the framework of such a mystery. Using some of the prophecies mentioned above in point II., give a portrait of Christ, reminding the young people that these prophecies were made hundreds of years before the fact. Then ask, Why did the people miss Him? It would seem that the people would have had "lookouts" posted in Bethlehem ready to announce when anyone fitting the description was noticed. When the wise men came to Bethlehem, everyone should have gone to



see Jesus with rejoicing! But instead, no one went. Everyone seemed concerned about the news, but in the wrong way. Then ask, How about us? Are we looking forward to the Lord's coming? This is a good test as to where we are with the Lord. If we are hungering after Him, we will want to know when, where, how, etc., He will come. Then the prophecies will be vital to us. But if our heart is not for Christ alone, we will somewhat try to ignore or even "wish away" the prophecies. Thus we need to ask the Lord to continually work with us until our heart is drawn to pursue Him as our unique goal.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** This lesson can be applied to the gospel in two steps: 1) The prophecies confirm that the Bible was written by God. There is no possibility that so many prophecies could have been fulfilled by chance. In a sense, the Bible puts itself on the spot every time a prophecy is made, but God uses prophecy to manifest that He is God, and that the Bible is His Word. 2) To what or to whom does this wonderful Book point us? The Bible testifies to us that we should believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was not an impostor or deceiver, yet neither was He just a great man. How do we know this? We know it through the testimony of the Bible. Every prophecy can be used as a test to prove that Jesus Christ is who He says He is. Enumerate the many prophecies He fulfilled, as illustrated in point II. He is the real Savior, He is the only Savior, and He alone has the Bible's "seal of approval." Others have claimed to be the Messiah, but only in Christ are the prophecies fulfilled. Since we all need a Savior, to whom should we turn? The Bible, which is God's own Word, does not point to anyone else but to Jesus Christ. If we want to be brought to God, we must come through Him (John 14:6). This is God's arrangement, and the Scripture testifies that this is the truth. Christ alone is the way of God's salvation. How is it that we receive this salvation? The Bible tells us this also! Share one or two verses that clearly portray the way of salvation through faith in Christ.

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God (II.F.1.); Knowing that the entire Bible is concerning Christ (II.F.2.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 1. (It is recommended that Messages 34–38 also be examined.)

**REFERENCES:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Messages 1, 34–39; *The Prophecy of the Four "Sevens" in the Bible*, Chapter 6; *Journey through the Bible*, Unit 1, Lesson 7; Unit 6, Lessons 10–11, 16, 18.

## ***Lesson 3—Christ as the King-Savior***

**OBJECTIVE:** To help the young people see that in the Gospel of Matthew, Christ is the King-Savior, coming to save sinners and bring them into His kingdom.

**SYNOPSIS:** Matthew's biography of Christ is from a particular perspective, showing that Christ is the King, the Christ of God prophesied in the Old Testament, who brings the kingdom of the heavens to the earth. Christ's genealogy proves that He is of the royal line and a legal heir to the throne. Christ's birth and youth show that, even in His early years, He was worshipped as the King by the magi, and hunted as the King by Herod. Christ's ministry on earth was for the sake of bringing man into His kingdom and Christ's death and resurrection cleared the way for all of us to become His kingdom people. He is the King-Savior, and from His birth all the way to His resurrection, Christ is working to establish His kingdom on earth. Matthew begins the entire New Testament with the arrival of such a King whose salvation ushers us out of our fallen condition and makes us kingdom people with a kingdom life.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew 1–28.

### **OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:**

*Christ as a wonderful person has four biographies that have been recorded in the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew presents Him as the King-Savior to bring man into the kingdom of the heavens. Mark presents Him as the Slave-Savior to serve man. Luke presents Him as the Man-Savior to bring salvation to man. And John presents Him as the God-Savior to be life to man. Each book presents a different angle of Christ in order to provide us with a full picture of this wonderful, all-inclusive Christ.*

#### **I. In Matthew, Christ came as the King-Savior to establish the kingdom**

*In the gospel of Matthew, Christ is presented in a very particular way. He is presented as the King-Savior for the establishment of His kingdom. Therefore we must view every verse and every chapter in Matthew from this perspective. When Matthew speaks of Christ's genealogy, he presents it with a view of Christ as the King-Savior for the establishment of His kingdom. When he presents Christ's birth, youth, ministry, death, and resurrection, he also presents it from the particular angle of Christ as the King-Savior for the establishment of His kingdom. Christ is the King-Savior and He desires to come into us with His kingly life to set up His throne within our heart. His salvation is not merely to save sinners from their sin, but even more, to make sinners constituents of His kingdom, reigning as kings in His divine life over every negative thing (Rom. 5:17). He wants to save us to this extent. When no one else could rule us or control us, we find that this King-Savior saves us and comes into us with His kingly life to rule within us and lead us to live a kingly life.*

#### **II. Matthew's record of Christ's genealogy, birth, and youth reveal that He is the King**

*Of the four Gospels, only Matthew and Luke have a record of Christ's genealogy, birth, and youth. Mark's Gospel contains no record of these things because Mark presents Christ as a slave. No one is interested in the genealogy, birth, or youth of a slave. John's Gospel on God also has no record of these things since God does not have genealogy, birth, or youth. He is without beginning of days and has no end of life, existing eternally without antecedents. Luke's gospel, on the other hand, presents Christ as a genuine man with a proper genealogy, birth, and youth.*

Matthew also records Christ's genealogy, birth, and youth, but presents it from the perspective of Christ as the King-Savior.

**A. The King's genealogy proves His royal status—Matt. 1:1–17**

The genealogy of Christ presented in Matthew provides undeniable proof of God's sovereignty in providing a proper lineage for Christ, the King. In order to be the proper heir to David's throne, Christ had to be a descendant of David. Both Mary and Joseph were descendants of David and provided Christ with a proper lineage to inherit the throne. In addition, it is valuable that we note how the genealogy of Christ contains the names of five women: Tamar who committed incest, Rahab who was a prostitute, Ruth who was a Moabitess, Bathsheba who committed adultery, and Mary who was a pure virgin. "Some of these were Gentiles, some were remarried, and three were sinful....This indicates that Christ is related not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles, even to the sinful people, and is the kingly Savior of typical sinners" (Matthew 1:3, footnote 2).

**B. The King's birth and youth reveal that He is truly the King—Matt. 2**

As we read Matthew's account, we sense that every chapter of his book is meaningful, showing that Christ is truly a King. Consider the following points.

**1. Christ was born as the King prophesied in the Old Testament—2 Sam. 7:12–13; Matt. 1:1, 20; Luke 1:32–33**

The Old Testament prophesied the coming of this King (2 Sam. 7:12–13) and now He has come to solve man's problems, meet man's need, and bring man into His kingdom. Matthew's account begins the entire New Testament by saying, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David..." (Matt. 1:1). As the son of David He is the real Solomon inheriting the kingdom and fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies.

**2. Christ was sought and worshipped by the magi who called Him the "King of the Jews"—Matt. 2:2**

This account in chapter 2 is unique to the book of Matthew. Magi from the east sought Him, found Him, and worshipped Him. The perspective given here regarding His youth shows that Christ is the King.

**3. Christ was sought for destruction by Herod the king—Matt. 2:3, 13–18**

When Herod heard that Christ, the King of the Jews, was born, he became envious and sought to destroy Him. The account here again shows that Christ is the King. His birth aroused the envy of King Herod who did away with all the boys in Bethlehem in hopes of destroying the newborn King.

**III. Matthew's record of Christ's ministry reveals that Christ came to bring sinners into His kingdom**

**A. The kingdom is a realm of God's ruling and a realm of God's life—John 3:5**

The kingdom of God is not an organization according to the natural concept, but it is a realm of God's heavenly ruling and a realm of life. As the King-Savior, the Lord preached the gospel of the kingdom so that people could participate in His divine life and come under His heavenly ruling. John 3:5 says, "Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." When we were



*regenerated by being born of the Spirit, we entered into the kingdom of God. Just as an animal enters into the animal kingdom by being born an animal, we can only enter into God's kingdom by being born of God.*

**B. The King's preaching began with repentance for the kingdom—Matt. 4:17**

*The ministry of both John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2) and Christ (Matt. 4:17) began with, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." To repent is to have a change in mind and a turn toward God and His kingdom. Whether we think we are sinful or not, we were all born in rebellion and need to come under His ruling to be brought into His kingdom. Whenever we repent, we gain Him as the King and He gains us as His people. This is the kingdom. When Christ gains us and we gain Him, the kingdom is present with us.*

**C. The King's teaching centered on the kingdom—Matt. 5–7, 13, 24–25**

*In Matthew chapters 5–7, 13, and 24–25 the Lord taught concerning the kingdom of the heavens. The words of a king are always notable, but no words are so spiritual, so pure, so enlightening, so authoritative, so wise, and so high in morality as the words of Christ in Matthew. His teaching touches not only man's outward deeds, but touches even more his inward being, such as Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." In Matthew 5–7 we see His decree of the kingdom's constitution, a decree that can only be carried out by those with the Father's divine life (Matt. 5:48).*

**D. The King's salvation of sinners was to bring them into the kingdom—Matt. 8–9**

*The King's salvation in Matthew was for the purpose of bringing people into the kingdom. He cared for the lepers (the rebellious—Matt. 8:3), the paralyzed (those dead in function due to sinfulness—Matt. 8:13), the fever-ridden (Matt. 8:14–15), those with diseases (Matt. 8:16), and the despised tax collectors and sinners (Matt. 9:9–11). He came to them not as a judge to condemn them but as a Physician (Matt. 9:12) to make them heavenly constituents of His kingdom. (Matt. 9:12, footnote 1).*

**IV. Matthew's record of Christ's death and resurrection also portrays Christ as the King for the establishing of His kingdom—Matt. 27–28**

*In Matthew 27–28, the record of Christ's death and resurrection is also from the perspective of the kingdom. Christ's kingdom is based on righteousness and we can see that Matthew's record of Christ's death deals very much with the matter of righteousness. Christ was unrighteously betrayed by Judas (Matt. 26:47–48); He was unrighteously arrested by the Jewish leaders (Matt. 26:59, 65); He was unrighteously judged and scourged by Pilate (Matt. 27:26); He was unrighteously stripped, spit upon, and beaten by the governor's soldiers (Matt. 27:27–31); and unrighteously crucified on the cross (Matt. 27:34). Then over His head on the cross they placed a charge against Him saying, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37). However, while He was on the cross, God came in and righteously judged Him for our sakes, placing on Him all the sins of mankind and making Him sin on our behalf (Matt. 27:45–50; 2 Cor. 5:21). All of man's unrighteousness was gathered onto Christ and judged by the righteous God in order that we might be saved. God's full salvation is based on righteousness (Rom 1:16–17) and God's throne is also founded on righteousness (Psa. 89:14). Because of Christ's righteous death, we have been saved and brought into His kingdom (Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18). After Christ died, having satisfied the righteous demands of God on our behalf, He was righteously raised by God and*

*given all the authority in the universe. Then as the righteous King He charged His disciples to go and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the Triune God. In this way, the heathen people are brought into an organic union with the Triune God to become the constituents of Christ's heavenly kingdom. What a King-Savior! From His birth to His resurrection and commission, Christ is truly the King-Savior. Today He is within us as the King, guiding us by His inner ruling and leading us to reign in life (Rom. 5:17).*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** After Christ was born as the King, ministered as the King, died as the King, and resurrected as the King, Christ came into us to reign as King for His kingdom. His last words in the book of Matthew were, "And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age" (Matt. 28:20). This word is significant for it shows that Christ, the King, is with us all the time. In every kingdom with a king, there is always the question of how the king can rule over so many people. His reign over his territory depends mainly on his army and government. Nevertheless, he has no way of monitoring the obedience of every subject in his kingdom and is incapable of supplying his subjects to live a life according to his constitution. How wonderful it would be if the king could live within his subjects and be with them every day, guiding them to live a kingdom life. Such is our Christ. He is unique because He as the King is with us and within us every day of our life. If we are doing something, speaking something, going somewhere, or handling something that is not so proper, the King within us will begin to gently give us a ruling sense within of His displeasure. Then, as we open up to this ruling sense and receive grace, He supplies us with His kingly life to reign in life in every situation (Rom. 5:17). In this way, we live the kingdom life according to His desire.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** The preaching of the gospel by John the Baptist in Matthew was probably some of the most powerful, heart-convicting preaching ever spoken. As the forerunner of Christ, the King-Savior, John boldly declared, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near" (Matt. 3:2). By this one word, John indicated that every man must have a radical change in his thinking and make a turn in his life-pursuit. Man's goal of pursuing has been other things; now he must turn toward God and His heavenly, spiritual kingdom (cf. Matthew 3:2, footnote 2). John continued by saying to the people, "...who prompted you to flee from the coming wrath?...And already the axe is laid at the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. I baptize you in water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is stronger than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt. 3:7b, 10–11). John, without partiality, let all the people know that Christ will baptize those who repent in the Holy Spirit and those who do not repent in the lake of fire. Repent today and believe in Christ to receive the Holy Spirit so that you could have eternal life and enter into His kingdom. Otherwise, Christ will baptize you in fire (cf. Matt. 3:11, footnote 1).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 1.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Messages 1; 4; 5; 7; 8, pp. 99–103; 70–72; *Life-study of Mark*, Message 13.



## Lesson 4—Christ as the Slave-Savior

**OBJECTIVE:** To help the young people see that in the Gospel of Mark, Christ is the Slave-Savior serving sinners for God's plan.

**SYNOPSIS:** In Mark's biography of Christ, Christ is presented not as a noble King, but as a lowly Slave. He is a Slave coming not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). For this reason, Mark's Gospel takes on a very different perspective from Matthew's Gospel. Rather than presenting us with Christ's wonderful words, Mark's intention is to impress us with His excellent deeds. It is the deeds of a slave that are important, not his words. Therefore, Mark presents vivid detail of the different actions that the Lord took on behalf of sinners in order to bring them into God's purpose. He was prophesied in Isaiah as the Servant of God and He is spoken of by Paul as the One who humbled Himself even unto death. He lowered Himself to the lowest estate, and as a slave He labored faithfully for God's purpose. No person is so lowly, so lovely, and so approachable as this slave of God who came to serve us for our salvation.

**CHAPTER(S):** Mark 1–16.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*Matthew's biography of Christ presents Him as the King-Savior coming to bring the kingdom of the heavens to earth. Mark's biography presents Him from a totally different perspective, showing that He is a lowly slave to serve man. What a thought! The very God of the universe has lowered Himself to be a Slave to serve you and me. In this biography, Christ has no genealogy, no status, no outward beauty, few words of teaching, and few words of deep truths. Why? Because He is just a lowly slave serving God. For this reason, Mark stresses mainly the excellent deeds of this slave, rather than His status and teaching.*

#### I. As a slave of God, Christ served sinners with His life as their ransom for the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God—Mark 10:45

*The Lord, in Mark 10:45 said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many." "This is the strongest expression, stating that the Slave-Savior, as the Son of Man in His humanity, was a Slave of God to serve sinners even by giving His life" (Mark 10:45, footnote 1). In Matthew, He is the King; in Luke, He is the only genuine and proper man who ever lived on this earth; and in John, He is the very God. But in Mark, He is presented as a lowly slave, diligently serving sinners for God's purpose. During His entire life, He faithfully labored for God's purpose, and on the cross, He gave His life as a ransom in order to redeem us back to God. What a wonderful service He accomplished for us!*

#### II. As a slave of God, Christ was spoken of in detail by Isaiah and Paul

##### A. He is the slave of God, the Servant of Jehovah, prophesied by Isaiah—Isa. 42:1–4, 6–7; 49:5–7; 50:4–7; 52:13–53:12

*In Mark's Gospel, Christ as the Slave of God, the Servant of Jehovah, is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah. Isaiah 42:1 says, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold, My chosen One in whom My soul delights." Isaiah describes this Servant of God in a most detailed fashion. He grew up in a poor carpenter's home as a "root out of dry ground," and He had no form, no majesty, and no beauty (Isa. 53:2). He was a despised man of sorrows, acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:2–3). As such, He tasted all the sufferings of human life. He was also the slave of rulers (Isa. 49:7), and He gave His back to the smiters (Isa. 50:6). He*

did not cry out or make His voice heard in the street (Isa. 42:2) and He did not break a bruised reed or quench the smoking flax (Isa. 42:3). As the Slave of God He had the tongue of the instructed (Isa. 50:4) and trusted in God (Isa. 50:7). He bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, was crushed because of our iniquities, and was chastened for our peace (Isa. 53:4–5). He poured out His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12). Then in resurrection, He justified us and was exalted and lifted up (Isa. 53:11; 52:13). He is now the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6). What a wonderful Slave of God. In Mark, the Savior fulfilled all of these prophecies. (See Life-study of Mark, Message 2).

**B. He was the slave obedient even unto death spoken of by Paul—Phil. 2:5–9**

In Philippians, Paul speaks of how Christ humbled Himself to the lowest point. Having the form of God, He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave. He humbled Himself further by becoming obedient even unto death. Not just any death, but the death of a cross. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest peak and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name—the name of Jesus.

**III. As a slave of God, Christ is so lovely, admirable, and approachable**

In Matthew, Christ is presented as the King, but Mark presents Him as a lowly, lovely, admirable, and approachable slave. For this reason we should treasure the book of Mark. “Suppose the President of the United States, after completing his term of office, would serve as a janitor. After being President, he would willingly lower himself to become a janitor to serve others. Would this not be excellent? The excellency of such a man in his presidency could not compare with the excellency in his becoming a janitor. I believe that most citizens would appreciate him more in his being a janitor than in his being a President. With him as a President we would not see as much of the beauty of his humanity. If he would become a janitor to serve others, we would see the beauty, the virtue, in his humanity. How beautiful for a person, after occupying the high office of President of the United States, to become a janitor! I doubt that any of us would feel comfortable in the presence of a President, but we would all feel comfortable with a janitor. How excellent it would be to see a former President working as a janitor, for we would see in him excellent human virtues! Which kind of person do you prefer—a President or a janitor? I would rather be with a janitor than with a President. If the President were to invite me to spend the night at the White House, I would not feel at home. If a former President were to become a janitor and invite me into his home for the night, I would feel very comfortable” (Life-study of Mark, Message 1, p. 4).

**IV. As a slave, His excellent deeds are stressed rather than His wonderful words**

“...In contrast to Matthew, who presents to us the Savior’s marvelous teachings and parables concerning the heavenly kingdom, and John, who presents His profound revelations of the divine truths, Mark’s intention is not to impress us with the Slave’s wonderful words but with His excellent deeds in His gospel service. Mark’s Gospel provides more detail than the other Gospels in order to portray the Slave-Savior’s diligence, faithfulness, and other virtues in the saving service He rendered to sinners for God” (Mark 1:1, footnote 1). For example, Mark 5:1–20 records the Slave-Savior’s casting out a legion of demons. This portion in Mark is much more detailed than its parallel portion in Matthew 8:28–34. Mark does this to impress us with the Lord’s work. Then in Mark 8:27–30, we find that Mark does not give as much detail of Christ’s teaching as Matthew does in Matthew 16:13–20 when Peter says to the Lord, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Mark’s record seeks to emphasize the Lord’s



work as a Slave rather than His wonderful words. As a rule, the words of a slave are not as important as is his diligent labor in his service.

**A. He did things immediately—Mark 1:10, 42–43**

*“Mark’s record of a Slave reflects not the splendor of the status of this Slave’s person but the diligence of His service. The word immediately is used in his record forty-two times....” (Mark 1:10, footnote 1). This shows that the Lord was instant and constant in His obedience to God. He was a slave of excellent character. Often when we are asked to do a small job, we do not do it immediately, but the Lord, as the diligent Slave of God, did things immediately and faithfully. He never procrastinated and He was never lethargic.*

**B. He did things diligently—Mark 1:35; 3:20–21**

*The Lord, as a slave of God, was very diligent. Mark 1:35 says, “And rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.” Although the Lord may have gone to bed quite late, He still was diligent to wake up early to pray to the Father in order to seek the Father’s will and carry out His gospel service according to the Father’s desire. In Mark 3:20–21 the Lord was so busy that He did not even have time to eat. He labored diligently for God’s purpose and was not lazy in His service for sinners.*

**C. He did things in an orderly way—Mark 6:39–40**

*When the Lord performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand, He displayed an orderly humanity. He had the crowd sit down in a very orderly way in companies of hundreds and fifties. In this way, the disciples were able to distribute the food in an orderly manner. By observing the Lord’s excellent deeds, we see that the Lord was a diligent and orderly slave of God who did things immediately in His gospel service for sinners.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Often, we do not have the desire to serve others but only care to be served. We enjoy when others attend to our needs and give their attention to our desires. But when others need help (with the dishes, the garbage, mowing the lawn, helping with the cleaning at the meeting hall, speaking to others about the Lord for their salvation, etc.) we are sometimes not that willing to serve. Serving others requires that we stoop down and lower ourselves, setting aside our convenience, our schedule, our preoccupations, our comfort, and our pride. The Lord did this for us. He laid aside His glory (cf. Hymn #82) and stooped down to be a slave to serve us. Expecting nothing from us, He came and carried out a service for us sinners in order that we could be brought into God’s purpose. Now He indwells us to serve others with Himself for their salvation. We can serve others by befriending them, visiting them, and speaking to them about a Christ who gave His life as a ransom for others. He served us; now we can serve others by the supply of His serving life for their salvation.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** Perhaps the most touching and precious aspect of the Lord’s service for sinners is that He came as a faithful slave, obedient unto death, that we might receive eternal life. The gospel can be presented very effectively by using the first three points of this outline as follows: 1) Particularly stress that as a slave of God, Christ served sinners with His life as their ransom for the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God (cf. Mark 10:45 and footnote 1). 2) Then, use the detailed portrait of our wonderful Slave-Savior’s life of suffering from Isaiah to impress the listeners with the preciousness of the Lord Jesus as our Slave-Savior. 3) After such a humble and obedient life, ending in the death of a cross, Paul tells us that He has been exalted and given a name above every name in the universe, and that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! This portion in Philippians 2 rightly declares the

Lord's supreme position of ascendancy. Yet, such a majestic, powerful, and exalted One is so lovely, admirable and approachable! "We need to present Christ as the most precious One to people. The more we describe Him and speak of His preciousness, the more something will be infused into the being of the listeners. This infusion will become their faith, and this faith will cause them to respond to our preaching....Faith is Christ preached into us to become our capacity to believe through our appreciation of Him" (*Life-study of Galatians*, Message 8, p. 73).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II. C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Life-study of Mark*, Messages 1–2; *Christ as the Reality*, Chapter 7, pp. 75–76.

**REFERENCES:** *Christ as the Reality*, Chapter 7, pp. 75–76; *Life-study of Mark*, Messages 1–3; Message 17, p. 154; Message 60, pp. 509–510; Mark 1:1, footnote 1; Mark 1:10, footnote 1; Mark 10:45, footnote 1; *The Secret of Experiencing Christ*, Chapter 2, p. 24; *Life-study of Galatians*, Message 8, p. 73.



## Lesson 5—Christ as the Man-Savior

**OBJECTIVE:** To present Luke's view of Christ our Savior as a genuine, proper, and normal man with the highest standard of morality.

**SYNOPSIS:** The Gospel of Luke presents a full picture of the Lord Jesus as the only proper and normal man who ever lived on earth. As such a man, He is qualified to be the Savior of mankind. Luke's record of the life of Jesus impresses us with the completeness and perfection of His humanity. The Lord Jesus lived according to the highest standard of morality. As such a man, Jesus is the Savior of mankind.

**CHAPTER(S):** Luke 1–24.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*"Christ, as the wonderful center of the entire Bible, is all-inclusive, having many aspects. The New Testament at its beginning presents four biographies to portray the four main aspects of this all-inclusive Christ. The Gospel of Matthew testifies that He is the King, the Christ of God according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, the One who brings the kingdom of the heavens to the earth. The Gospel of Mark presents Him as the Slave of God, the One who labors for God faithfully. Mark's account is most simple, for a slave does not need a detailed record. The Gospel of Luke presents a full picture of Christ as the only proper and normal man who ever lived on earth, and thus the Savior of mankind. The Gospel of John unveils Him as the Son of God, the very God Himself, to be life to God's people." (Life-study of Luke, Message 9, pp. 73–74). Here in the Gospel of Luke, we see a wonderful picture of Christ as the perfect and finest man.*

#### **I. The Lord Jesus was a genuine, proper, and normal man, conceived and born with the human essence and human nature**

*The Man-Savior is a genuine man with the real human nature. He was conceived and born with the human essence and human nature. Not only so, but the Lord Jesus was also the only proper and normal man that ever lived. He had the perfect human virtues. As a man, the Man-Savior is genuine and real; He was a real human being. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus was a proper and normal man, the only man who ever lived a fully proper and normal human life.*

#### **A. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a human virgin and born to be a genuine man—Luke 1:26–35; 2:1–20**

*The Lord Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a human virgin and born to be a genuine man. Luke 1 describes the Lord's conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a human virgin to be a genuine man. Luke 2 describes His birth and a number of incidents concerning His childhood. These incidents are presented by Luke to be strong evidences that the Lord Jesus was a real, genuine, proper, and perfect man. The record concerning His circumcision on the eighth day to fulfill the law of God's ordination, His growth according to the natural law of the human life, and His being subject to His human parents are clear and strong proof that the Lord Jesus was a proper and genuine man. (All of these points under I.A. will be covered in more detail in Lessons 14–16 of this unit.)*

#### **1. Jesus developed for nine months in His mother's womb and was born as a human baby according to the law of God's creation of man—Luke 2:6–7**

2. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day to fulfill the law of God's ordination, that He might be the legal seed of Abraham—Luke 2:21–24; Gen. 18:9–14; 12:3; Gal. 3:8, 14
  3. As a boy, Jesus grew up according to the law of the human life, being subject to His human parents—Luke 2:40–52
- B. To prove that Jesus is a proper and normal man, Luke presents the genealogy of this man, testifying that He is qualified to be the Savior of mankind—Luke 3:23–38**

*"The genealogy of Luke's Gospel, the Gospel of the Man-Savior, begins from man and traces back to God (vv. 23, 38). This Gospel emphasizes His humanity to affirm His human-divine status....The Gospel of Luke presents a full picture of Christ as the only proper and normal man who ever lived on earth, and thus the Savior of mankind....Among the four Gospels, Matthew and Luke have a record of genealogies; Mark and John do not. To testify that Jesus is the King, the Christ of God prophesied in the Old Testament, Matthew needs to show us the antecedents and status of this King, proving that He is the proper successor to the throne of David. To prove that Jesus is a proper and normal Man, Luke needs to show the generations of this Man, attesting that He is qualified to be the Savior of mankind. For the record of a slave, Mark does not need to tell us His origin. To unveil that Jesus is the very God, neither does John need to give us a human genealogy. Rather, John declares that as the Word of God He is the very God in the beginning....In 3:23–38 the Man-Savior's genealogy is traced backwards from Jesus to Adam....To prove that Jesus is a proper Man to be the Savior of mankind by relating His genealogy, Luke traces back to Adam, the first generation of mankind" (Life-study of Luke, Message 9, p. 74).*

**C. The Lord Jesus is a God-man, possessing both divinity and humanity**

*The Lord Jesus is a God-man, possessing both the divine essence and the human essence, both the divine nature and the human nature. In Him, the two essences are mingled together. He had the human nature with its virtues to contain and express God. "We need to see that the Lord Jesus is the Man-Savior. As the Man-Savior, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence....The Holy Spirit is God Himself reaching man....The essence is the intrinsic constituent of a certain substance. The Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit not only with the divine nature but with the divine essence....The Man-Savior was [also] born of a human virgin with the human essence. In [Luke] 1:27 and 31 we see that a virgin named Mary conceived in her womb and bore a Son whose name was Jesus. Because the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence and was born of a human virgin with the human essence, He has two essences, the divine and the human. With Him there is the mingling of the divine essence with the human essence" (Life-study of Luke, Message 1, pp. 4–5). (This matter will be covered in more detail in Lesson 11 of this unit.)*

**II. The Lord Jesus lived according to the highest standard of morality**

*Here the word "morality" is not used in a traditional sense. Rather, it refers to the most proper kind of human living, the standard of life that God requires and intended man to achieve. The Lord Jesus was the finest man, the only real man, and the only true and proper man that ever lived. To say He lived a life in the highest standard of morality means that He lived a life in*



*which the divine attributes were expressed in the human virtues. "This morality is a matter of having the human virtues strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes" (Life-study of Luke, Message 10, p. 86). The Lord's living in the highest standard of morality will be covered in more detail in Lessons 17–18 of this unit.*

**A. The Lord Jesus expressed God in a human living by His human virtues strengthened and uplifted with the divine attributes**

*God created man as a vessel to contain and express Himself. The man God created had human virtues that corresponded to God's divine attributes (this is covered in more detail in Lesson 18). The human virtues are like a glove; the divine attributes are like the hand to be the content and reality of these virtues. The God-created human virtues that man possesses, such as love, compassion, sympathy, tenderness, courage, and responsibility, correspond to the divine attributes, such as love, light, holiness, righteousness, and faithfulness. The human virtues of the Lord Jesus were strengthened and uplifted with the divine attributes. Thus, He lived a life expressing God in humanity.*

**B. The Lord Jesus was the man that God intended from the beginning—Gen. 1:26; 2:7–9**

**C. The Lord Jesus was the only proper and normal man who ever lived on this earth**

**III. As such a man, Jesus Christ is the Savior of mankind, ministering to mankind in His human virtues with His divine attributes**

*The Lord ministered to mankind in His human virtues with His divine attributes. Our Savior was a genuine man. By living a human life that fully expressed God's divine attributes in His human virtues, the Lord Jesus was also a sinless and perfect man. Only as a genuine man who was also sinless and perfect was He qualified to die for us as our substitute. Furthermore, The gospel of Luke presents a particular portrait of Christ as the Man-Savior. As a man expressing the divine attributes in His human virtues, He was such a proper, normal, perfect, and upright, yet tender and compassionate Man. His human virtues enabled Him to reach us the sinners, even in our fallen, despised, and lowly state. As He contacted the sinners, the Lord Jesus revealed God in His saving grace to fallen mankind. His virtuous living, strengthened and uplifted by the divine attributes, enabled even the most fallen sinners to know God as grace.*

**A. The Lord Jesus, as the only genuine and perfect man who ever lived, was uniquely qualified to die as man's Savior**

**B. The Lord Jesus, as the finest and most proper man, was able to reach and minister to fallen sinners**

**C. The Lord's living revealed God in His saving grace to fallen mankind**

*The gospel of Luke presents a particular portrait of Christ as the man-Savior. Consider the Lord's contact with the sinful woman in the home of a Pharisee in Luke 7:36–50. The Lord's virtues of sympathy, compassion, kindness, patience, mercy, understanding, love, and wisdom are all displayed here. These virtues are filled with the divine attributes of love, forgiveness, peace, and mercy as their content. As such a person contacting sinners, the Lord was able to reveal and minister the saving grace of God to them. Consider also the story of the Lord saving the thief on the cross (Luke 23:32–43), or the parables of the Lord as the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) and the Shepherd (Luke 15:3–7). In all these cases*

*we see the Lord ministering the saving grace of God to sinners in His human virtues with His divine attributes. (It may help to speak or read these stories with the young people in order to point out the Lord's human virtues strengthened and uplifted by the divine attributes. Please also refer to Life-study of Luke, Messages 2, 11.)*

#### **IV. The Christ who possesses the human virtues strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes lives in us today**

*"Today the very Christ who lives in us is still the One who possesses the human virtues strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes. While He was on earth, He lived a life in the highest standard of morality. Such a life was a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. Of course, the Lord Jesus lived this kind of life outside the disciples. But from the time of His resurrection He has been living this kind of life within the believers. This means that within us today the Man-Savior is still living a life in the highest standard of morality, a life that is a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. If we see this, we shall say with Paul, 'It is no longer I, but Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2:20). Have you ever realized that the Christ who lives in you is a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues? The kind of life He lived on earth He is now seeking to live in us." (Life-study of Luke, Message 2, pp. 13–14). See also Christ as the Reality, Chapters 6, 13, and 16.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Spend some time to read and consider the Lord's forgiving of the sinful woman in the home of a Pharisee in Luke 7:36–50, highlighting the Lord's human virtues and the divine attributes that strengthened and uplifted them. Use the story to show the young people the sweetness of the Lord's being the Man-Savior to reach fallen men and minister to them God's saving grace. In Luke 7:36–50 a sinful woman came into the home of a Pharisee named Simon who had invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him. This woman was despised by Simon. However, the Lord received and forgave the sinful woman. "As we read the account of this incident, we see that Jesus, the Man-Savior, conducted Himself in His human virtues. He was not at all bothered by that sinful woman, even when 'she began to wet His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hair of her head' and when 'she kissed His feet affectionately and anointed them with the ointment' (v. 38). If we had been the Lord Jesus, we probably would have been troubled by the behavior of this woman. We might have said to her, 'Don't you know that I am a guest in this house? Can't you see that I am eating?' However, to act in that way would be to fail to act in the proper human virtues. In this situation the Man-Savior was very kind and patient, realizing that this woman had been convicted of her sins. He was also merciful. People often speak about love, but rarely about mercy. Mercy, however, is more tender than love. To be merciful is to sympathize with others in their poor condition and low estate. In addition to exercising kindness, patience, and mercy toward the woman, the Lord Jesus also exercised His understanding. Often we fail to understand others, but the Lord Jesus was very understanding in the case of this woman. Furthermore, He was wise and loving" (Life-study of Luke, Message 11, p. 90). The Lord's divine attributes are expressed here in the divine forgiveness (Luke 7:47–48) and in the giving of peace (Luke 7:50). God is the only one who is qualified to forgive sins. Therefore, forgiveness is one of the divine attributes. The giving of peace is also a divine attribute, because God is the only one who can give inner peace. Our dear Lord Jesus, ministering to us in His human virtues with His divine attributes, is such a sweet, lovable, and approachable Man-Savior.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** Man's living today is pitifully low. The standard of morality taught in schools and accepted in society is plummeting. A person with a proper morality, pure motives, a strong character, a loving heart for others, and genuineness in speech is hard, if not impossible, to find in today's society. Consider yourself and your heart toward your parents,



friends, and those whom you profess to love. The Bible reveals that what is really in our heart is manifested by what our mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). We know that God can give us eternal life, but how can we be saved from our poor manner of living? In incarnation, the infinite God became a finite man, expressing in His humanity the bountiful God in His rich attributes through His aromatic virtues. He had no outward beauty that would attract others to Himself (Isa. 53:2-3), yet His divinely enriched humanity charmed and compelled people to leave everything at a moment's notice to follow Him (Matt. 4:21-22). The good news today is that Christ's human living is available for us to receive! Such a wonderful One has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) and is able to be received as the source of our daily living (Gal. 2:20). In this way we too can live a life of the highest standards, on the highest plane, expressing the highest humanity. The choice can now be made to receive Him as the One who is not only the complete God but also a perfect man.

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Life-study of Luke*, Message 2; Message 10, pp. 84-87; Message 11, pp. 89-92; Message 27, pp. 227-229.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of Luke*, Messages 1-2, 9-11; Message 15, p. 129; Message 25; Message 27, pp. 227-229; Messages 57-61; *Christ as the Reality*, Chapter 6, pp. 61-63; Chapter 13, pp. 131-136; Chapter 16, pp. 153-159.



## Lesson 6—Christ as the God-Savior

**OBJECTIVE:** To show that the distinguishing characteristic of the Gospel of John is that Christ is revealed as the God-Savior to be life to His people.

**SYNOPSIS:** The Gospel of John reveals Christ as the God-Savior. In John, Christ is shown to be the very God in eternity past who stepped out of eternity into time in order to bring man into eternity with Him as His eternal counterpart and expression. In order to accomplish this, God had to become life to man. The Gospel of John reveals the process by which God did this. First, God became flesh. Second, God passed through death and imparted Himself into His believers as the Spirit in resurrection. These two “becomings” produced a corporate and organic entity which fulfills and satisfies God’s eternal desire. Such a God-Savior meets every man’s need by dispensing Himself into man as life.

**CHAPTER(S):** John 1, 20.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*Matthew, Mark, and Luke are often called “the synoptic gospels,” for they share a common perspective and draw from many of the same events in their writings (although they emphasize these events differently according to the aspect of Christ they portray). Many of the cases John chooses, however, are not found in the other Gospels, for he is presenting Christ as the very Triune God who came to be life to man. Therefore, John’s Gospel is deeper and more mysterious than the other Gospels. It is quite possible that John’s Gospel was the last New Testament book written. His ministry truly became a “mending ministry,” as was foretold by what was occupying him when the Lord called him (Matt. 4:21). In his ministry he mended the gaps in the truth through which misunderstanding and heresy would have crept in. The way he did this was by emphasizing that God’s purpose and our salvation can only be carried out by experiencing God as life. To emphasize anything other than life produces “tears” and “holes”; life alone mends every situation and brings us back to God’s economy. In the Gospel of John, the Triune God is flowing to reach man as life in order to bring man into the fulfillment of His eternal purpose.*

### I. The Gospel of John reveals Christ as the God-Savior

#### A. Christ as the God-Savior stepped out of eternity onto the bridge of time in order to carry out His eternal purpose to bring man into eternity with Him

*The Gospel of John begins with “In the beginning....” The book of Genesis also begins with this phrase, but in Genesis it merely refers to the beginning of creation and time. John’s Gospel takes us back further than Genesis, for John’s “beginning” refers to eternity past! John 1:1 declares that Christ was with God and was God in eternity past. The first chapter then concludes with the Lord’s declaration that angels would descend and ascend upon the Son of Man. This is a reference to Jacob’s dream at Bethel, which means “the house of God” (Gen. 28). Eventually Christ as the Son of Man will be enlarged from the individual Christ to the corporate Christ by gaining so many other men to become the New Jerusalem as the true Bethel where God and man would dwell together in eternity future. Hence, the introductory chapter of this Gospel shows us Christ from eternity past to eternity future, showing us God’s perspective. This Gospel goes on to describe what God had to accomplish on the “bridge of time” to save man in such a way.*

**B. Christ as the God-Savior has no genealogy**

*As God, Christ does not have a genealogy, so John's Gospel does not contain one. This is another proof that John is writing of Christ as the very God who came to be our Savior.*

**C. Christ as the God-Savior brings God as life to man**

*In order to accomplish His eternal goal, God had to become life to man. He could not merely bring man with Him into eternity in His natural state. Even if He could bring man with Him in this way, it would not satisfy His desire to dwell together with man in the closest and most intimate way. He had to put Himself into man as life in order to gain His eternal habitation in which He and man could dwell together in such mutuality. John reveals the process by which God became life to man, and how this life recovers man to God's eternal purpose.*

**II. The Gospel of John reveals the process by which God became life to man**

*Life (Greek, zoe, the uncreated life of God) is mentioned thirty-five times in John, far more than any other book of the Bible. It is in John that the Lord declares that He Himself is this life (John 14:6). John also tells us that we must receive this life to be regenerated (John 3:6–7), and that we must enjoy the processed Triune God as our breath (John 20:22), and our food and drink (John 6:32–63), which are all matters of life. It is John alone who gives us the account of blood and water flowing from the Lord's side (John 19:34), emphasizing not only the Lord's blood which redeems us judicially, but also the water, which symbolizes how we are saved organically for the producing of the church (cf. Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:25–27).*

**A. The Word became flesh—John 1:14**

*First, the eternally-preexistent God had to step into time and become a man of flesh! This was the first step of the process which God took to become life to man. Contained within Christ as the embodiment of God was the unique, uncreated, divine life (John 1:4), which was on its way to man!*

**B. He died in order to deal with everything that prevented man from receiving His life and to release the divine life concealed within the shell of His humanity—John 1:29; 3:14; 12:24**

*God had to become a man in order to die for man's judicial redemption as the Lamb of God, clearing the way for man to receive God as life. He also had to die in order to release the divine life which was contained within the shell of His humanity. Thus, just as a grain of wheat must die to release the life within it for the producing of other grains, He died so that He could release His divine life and reproduce Himself in many others. "This death broke His human shell so that His unlimited and infinite divine being with His divine life might be released from His flesh..." (Crystallization-study of John, Message 10, p. 104). In this way God, who was life, became multiplied and gained His increase!*

**C. In resurrection He became the consummated Spirit to impart Himself as life into His believers—John 7:39; 20:22**

*John is the only Gospel that clearly portrays the two "becomings" of Christ. First, through incarnation, He as God became a man (John 1:14); and secondly, in resurrection, He became the Spirit to be breathed as life by man (John 7:39; 20:22; cf. 1 Cor. 15:45). "In the Gospel of John, a book of the divine, mystical life in the divine, mystical realm, Christ is first the very God (John 1:1), and He eventually is consummated as the all-inclusive*



*Spirit" (Crystallization-study of John, Message 7, p. 85). As such a Spirit, God can finally come into man to be man's life. (In the Gospel of John there is no record of the open ascension of Christ, for its emphasis is that God has entered into the believers as life.)*

**D. By becoming life to man, God obtains His eternal goal**

*After God reaches man as life, something is produced which satisfies Him, something both organic and corporate. It is the Father's house in John 14, the vine with the branches in John 15, and the new child in John 16. It is also the Bride in John 3:29, and even the enlarged Son of Man in John 1:51. Once a person has received God as life, he becomes a living stone (cf. John 1:42) for God's building, a branch in the vine, an abode in the Father's house, a member of the new man, a betrothed virgin as a part of Christ's Bride, etc. All of this happens because God has reached us as life. Eventually, we all will be fully blent with the Triune God. This life, which is likened to a spring gushing up into eternal life (John 4:14), will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the totality of the eternal life. Praise the Lord! Every bit of the divine life we enjoy today will result in the New Jerusalem. This is the ultimate issue of this life which is within us today. John's Gospel grants us such a high appreciation of God's purpose and salvation!*

**III. Such a God-Savior can meet every man's need**

*John perceived that many things Jesus did were signs which allegorized how God as life could meet the need of every man. The first of these signs took place at a wedding where the Lord turned the water in six stone waterpots into wine. This indicates that this life's principle is to turn the death in man into life! What a wonderful gospel! Our real need, regardless of our situation, is simply this life! In John, these "signs" (or cases) indicate that life's regenerating meets the need of the moral (John 2:23–3:36), life's satisfying meets the need of the immoral (John 4:1–42), life's healing meets the need of the dying (John 4:43–54), life's enlivening meets the need of the impotent (John 5:1–47), life's feeding meets the need of the hungry (John 6:1–71), life's quenching meets the need of the thirsty (John 7:1–52), life's setting free meets the need of those under the bondage of sin (John 7:53–8:59), life's sight and life's shepherding meet the need of those who are blind in religion (John 9:1–10:42), and life's resurrecting meets the need of the dead (John 11:1–57)! Every human being is in one of these categories. This life is the processed Triune God. Only God in Christ as the Spirit is able to meet every man's need. This became John's gospel, and it should become ours! Our Savior is the very God who can meet our every need by bringing us Himself as our life. (A concise summary of the Lord meeting the need of all these cases can be found in The Mending Ministry of John, Chapter 2, pp. 10–13.)*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Stress how the Gospel of John reveals the process God went through to reach us as life. God flowed into a man (Jesus), and continued to flow as Jesus spoke and walked among men. His words even were a flowing out of this life (John 6:63). Eventually this flowing God flowed out in Jesus' death (as the water in John 19:34; cf. 4:14) and was imparted through His resurrection to His believers, also symbolized as air for them to breathe (John 20:22). All that God is as a flow will eventually end up in the New Jerusalem as the mutual habitation of God and man for eternity.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** Any of the cases in John 2–11 could be used for the gospel, but in general the picture in John shows us that God desires to be life to man. John 3:16 indicates that God's motive for this is His love for us. Man's real need is not just to have his sins cleansed; man's real need is to receive God's life. This was revealed from the very beginning of the Bible, when man was placed in front of the tree of life and warned away from eating the tree of

knowledge. Without God as life, our lives are empty, worthless, and pointless. God's life is the highest life. With the highest life there is the highest sense, the highest function, and the highest enjoyment! Our life is merely a created life, whereas God's life is uncreated and eternal. God Himself desires to be life to us! Once this was not possible, but He has now done everything to make Himself as life available to us today. All that is left for us to do is to believe, to receive (John 1:12).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Life-study of John*, Message 1.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of John*, Messages 1, 6-7, 43, 46, 48, 51; *The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity*, Chapters 11-13; *The Fulfillment of God's Purpose by the Growth of Christ in Us*, Chapter 1, pp. 10-11; *The Mending Ministry of John*, Chapters 1-3, 5-6; *Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John*, Messages 1-7, 10-11; Message 13, pp. 130-131; Messages 14-16.



## Lesson 7—Christ in His Deity (1)

**OBJECTIVE:** To understand that Jesus Christ is, has been, and always will be God.

**SYNOPSIS:** Christ is God. His deity is eternal and absolute. From eternity past to eternity future He is God. He is the complete God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. As the Son of God, Christ embodies God to be God's expression, the effulgence of God's glory, and the express image of God's substance.

**CHAPTER(S):** John 1.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*The majority of people on earth think of Jesus as a great teacher who taught men how to live a proper and ethical life; they do not realize that He was God walking on the earth among men. Even many Christians do not acknowledge that Jesus was and still is the very God who took humanity upon Himself. If we do not fully realize who Christ is, we will be lacking in our experience of Him.*

#### I. Christ is God

*Many Christians are not comfortable saying that Christ is God. They would rather just say He is the Son of God, the Second of the Trinity. If we know the Bible, however, we will be bold to declare that Christ is God. He is not only equal with God (Phil. 2:6); He is the embodiment of all that God is (Col. 2:9). "All that God is, is in Christ. This means that we cannot separate what God is from what Christ is, for God is embodied in Christ" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 21, p. 223).*

#### A. Christ is the complete God—Col. 2:9

*"First, in the Godhead our Christ is the complete God. For Christ to be the complete God means that He is the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Those who argue with this and say that Christ is only the Son are mistaken. On the one hand, the New Testament reveals that Christ is the Son; on the other hand, the New Testament reveals that Christ is God, even the complete God. We should not say that Christ is only partially God. On the contrary, He is the entire God, the whole God, the Triune God" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 21, p. 224).*

##### 1. Christ is the Father—Isa. 9:6; John 14:9

*In Isaiah 9:6, the Son is called the eternal Father. If we would agree that it is right to call the child (Jesus) the Mighty God, we must also agree that it is right to call Him the eternal Father. The child was the mighty God, so the Son must also be the eternal Father. Furthermore, in John 10:30 the Lord says, "I and the Father are one." They are not two, but one. The Lord even told Philip that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father (John 14:9). We should not think of Christ and the Father as two separate persons, for they are one.*

##### 2. Christ is the Son—Mark 1:1; John 20:31

*As the Son of God, Christ is the embodiment and expression of all that the Father is and has (John 16:15). As the Son, Christ is the One who obediently carries out God's economy (John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 5:19, 22, 25).*

**3. Christ is the Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17**

*Christ not only is the Son and the Father; He is also the Spirit. First Corinthians 15:45 says that Christ as the Last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. Therefore, Christ is the Holy Spirit, for there are not two divine Spirits. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 3:17 tells us emphatically that the Lord is the Spirit. Thus, elsewhere in the Scriptures, the Spirit is called "the Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7), "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11), and "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:19).*

**4. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily—Col. 2:9**

*"Because the Godhead comprises the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the fullness of the Godhead must be the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. As the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead, Christ is not only the Son of God but also the entire God" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 21, p. 226).*

**B. Christ is the eternal God—Heb. 1:8–10**

**1. Christ was God in eternity past—John 1:1**

*John clearly states that the Word who became flesh was with God and was God. Christ, who is the Word, was God in the beginning, in eternity past. This means that Christ has always embodied God. During John's day there were some who denied that Christ was God (as the Jehovah Witnesses do today). John states clearly that Christ was God from eternity.*

**2. Christ was God in incarnation—John 1:14; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Phil. 2:5–7**

*Through incarnation, the eternal God stepped into time! There are at least three "namings" which indicate Jesus was God born into humanity. God instructed Joseph (Matt. 1:21) to name Him "Jesus," which means "Jehovah (our) Savior." Isaiah also says He would be called "Immanuel," which means "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23). Furthermore, Isaiah tells us this child would be called "Mighty God" (Isa. 9:6). All these names indicate Christ was God incarnate. The infinite, eternal, and unlimited God allowed Himself to be limited and restricted in finite humanity. He was confined in Mary's womb for nine months, and then passed through every phase of human growth from childhood onward. What an experience that must have been for Him! Regardless of how humbled and restricted He was in His humanity, Christ was always fully God.*

**3. Christ was God in death and resurrection—Acts 20:28; John 20:28**

*Even though Christ experienced separation economically from the Father on the cross, He was still God dying there, shedding His blood for us (Acts 20:28). In Christ, God passed through death into resurrection, and Christ was still God when He entered into resurrection (John 20:28–29).*

**4. Christ is God now and forever—Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:8**

*Today in ascension, Christ is still God. He sits on the throne of God (Rev. 22:3), which is also His throne for eternity (Heb. 1:8). He is over all, God blessed forever (Rom. 9:5). Enthroned in Christ as His embodiment, God will shine forth and flow out for all eternity (Rev. 21:23; 22:1)!*



## II. Christ is the Son of God

*This is a difficult thing for our minds to grasp. How could Christ be both God and the Son of God? We are accustomed to thinking of persons as being separate from each other. Christ, however, as the Son of God is not a separate person from God, but is the embodiment and expression of all that God is. As John 1:1 indicates, Christ as the Word is both God and is with God. The three of the Trinity are not "thirds"; rather, they are so much of each other and into each other ("coinhering") that there is no way to separate them (John 14:11, 20; 17:21).*

### A. As the Son of God, Christ is the expression of God the Father—John 1:18; 14:9

*Even in human life a son often greatly expresses his father in appearance and behavior. Christ, as the Son of God, fully expresses the Father in every way. Whoever sees Christ, sees the Father (John 14:9). This is because Christ as the Son embodies the Father. When the Son came, the Father came. Wherever the Son was, the Father was (John 8:16, 29; 16:32). All that Christ as the Son of God does expresses the Father and is out from the Father.*

### B. As the Son of God, Christ is the effulgence of the Father's glory and the express image of His substance—Heb. 1:3

*These two phrases illustrate the relationship between God the Father and Christ His Son. "The effulgence of God's glory is like the shining or the brightness of the light of the sun. The Son is the shining, the brightness, of the Father's glory. This refers to God's glory. The impress of God's substance is like the impress of a seal. The Son is the expression of what God the Father is. This refers to God's substance" (Heb. 1:3, footnote 1). Can you separate the light's shining from the light? Can you separate a substance from its form? Impossible! Hebrews 1:3 further shows us how inappropriate and misleading it is to think of God the Son and God the Father as being two separate persons.*

### C. As the Son of God, Christ is the image of the invisible God—Col. 1:13b, 15

*As the One who embodies God, Christ is the very image of God. Image is for expression. As God's image, Christ is the expression of God's being in all His attributes and virtues (see Col. 1:15, footnote 1). God is invisible, but God is fully expressed in Christ in every way. Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26), which means we were really created according to Christ (Col. 1:15–16)!*

## III. Christ is who He is so that God could be dispensed into us

### A. God is in Christ to be dispensed into man

*"When we say that God is dispensing Himself into us, we need to realize that this dispensing God in His economy is Christ. Without being Christ, God could not dispense Himself into us. God is Christ for the purpose of His dispensing" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 21, p. 223). If Christ were merely an angel, as the Jehovah Witnesses claim, God's economy could not be carried out. God does not wish to see something angelic dispensed into us; He intends that He Himself would be dispensed into us! God is in Christ so that God Himself might become everything to us in His economy.*

### B. Christ's being the complete God and the Son of God is for this dispensing

*"Christ's being the complete God and the Son of God, the only begotten Son and the firstborn Son, are for the dispensing of God into His chosen people so that they may be His*

*corporate expression" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 21, p. 233). Because Christ as the Son embodies all that the Father is, and because He is the Spirit today, the entire Triune God can be dispensed into the tripartite man. As the Son of God, Christ accomplished all that the Father purposed and cleared away every obstacle that prevented us from receiving God as life. As the image of God, Christ as the Son of God is also the prototype for all the other sons of God (Rom. 8:29). This is a mystery, but Christ is both God and the Son of God so that we might enjoy God today as His many sons.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Use the verses under points I.A.1.-3. to show the entire Triune God dwells in Christ. The reason the entire Triune God dwells in Christ is so that the entire Triune God can be dispensed into us. This is a mystery that we cannot understand with our mind, but we can enjoy by contacting God.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** No philosopher, sage, or religious leader has ever dared to claim that He is God. Only Jesus said that He is God (John 10:30; 14:9). For this reason, one must come to the conclusion that Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or truly God. We dismiss the consideration that He was a liar because no liar would die for the sake of his lie. Because Jesus claimed that He was God, He was sentenced to death by the Jewish and Roman leaders. To the end of His life, He stood upon His claim of being God and died an all-inclusive death that accomplished an eternal redemption for man (Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:14). Neither could we call Him a lunatic, since His words were sound, full of wisdom, and rich with insight concerning God and the human plight. Since He is not a liar or a lunatic, we must believe He is what He says. Furthermore, His miraculous deeds proved that He was God (Matt. 8:26-27; John 11:43-44). The words of those who observed Him proved He was God (John 20:28). The Bible says that He is God (Isa. 9:6; Rom. 9:5). The experience of the believers throughout the centuries proves that He is God, and the power of His salvation proves that He is God. By believing into Him and calling on the name of Jesus, we receive God Himself (See *Gospel Outlines*, Subject 236, and the booklet, *Christ is God*).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 21; *The All-Inclusive Spirit of Christ*, pp. 1-9.

**REFERENCES:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Messages 21; 26, pp. 287-288; *The All-Inclusive Spirit of Christ*, pp. 1-9; *Concerning the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit*; *Concerning the Person of Christ*, pp. 1-27, 37-47; *Life-study of John*, Message 2, pp. 21-22; *The Economy of God*, Chapter 1; *God's New Testament Economy*, Chapters 1-4; 6; *The Knowledge of Life*, Chapters 1-2; *Gospel Outlines*, Subject 236; *Christ is God* (booklet).



## Lesson 8—Christ in His Deity (2)

**OBJECTIVE:** To understand that as the Word of God and Son of God, Christ embodies and expresses all that God is.

**SYNOPSIS:** In His deity, Christ is the Word (John 1:1) and the mystery of God (Col. 2:2) to define and explain God to us. As the Son of God who coinheres with the Father, Christ expresses and declares the Father. The dear, only-begotten Son is continually in the bosom of the Father to declare Him and to bring us into the enjoyment of the Father.

**CHAPTER(S):** John 1.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

#### I. As the Word of God, Christ is the explanation and definition of God

*"In eternity past, before time began, Christ was the Word of God....The Word here is logos in Greek. It means an expression constituted by a thought, which is understood by man. Although our God cannot be seen in the universe, He is the Word that can be understood by man. By this Word His mysterious being is explained and expressed" (The Mysteries in God's New Testament Economy, Chapter 1, p. 24). Without Christ, God would be unknown and unknowable. Christ conveys all that our marvelous God is to us. "As the Word, Christ is the defined God, the explained, expressed, and revealed God, the God made known to human beings" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 22, p. 236). This is why the Bible also refers to Christ as the mystery of God (Col. 2:2), for God is a mystery which can only be understood through Christ. The secret of knowing God is Christ.*

##### A. As the Word of God, Christ embodies God

*"The Bible tells us that the Word, who was God (John 1:1), became flesh. The Word is God's definition, and since it is God's definition it is God's embodiment. God is abstract and invisible since God is Spirit (John 4:24). Our thought is abstract and invisible, but when we put our thought into words these words become the definition of our thought, the very embodiment of our thought. The word is the definition, the expression, and the embodiment of our thought. If I spoke to you for one hour, you would know what my thought was because my thought is embodied in my word" (God's New Testament Economy, Chapter 2, p. 23). The more we speak, the less mysterious we are, for what is within us gets expressed. Christ spoke God through His words and actions. The more Christ spoke and worked, the more God became known and understood. Before we received Christ, we did not understand God and our concepts concerning Him were peculiar. However, after we received Christ, God and His purpose became known to us.*

##### B. As the Word, Christ as the definition of God is for God's speaking—Heb. 1:1–2

*"This Word as the definition of the Triune God is for God's speaking. The fact that this Word is the entire God means that it is for the speaking of the Triune God. This Word became incarnate as a man, and that man was God's speaking. This means that the Man Jesus Christ was God's Word, God's speaking. He spoke God not only with clear words but also with what He was and what He did. He is altogether the Word of God and the speaking of God. Sometimes He spoke with words, and at other times He spoke with actions. All that He was and all that He did spoke God" (The Conclusion of the New*

Testament, Message 22, pp. 235–236). Christ as the Word not only makes God known to us, He also carries out God's economy. We speak in order to work out our inner desires and intentions. (Consider how many different things we accomplish in our daily life by speaking or writing. If we did not have language, or a way of communicating or expressing our thoughts, how could we carry out any purpose?) In order to accomplish His purpose, God had to carry out so many tasks! He had to create so many objects, then He had to arrange so many events, and eventually He had to enter humanity and grow up to be a man who could die for us. All these tasks were carried out by Christ as God's Word.

## **II. As the Son of God, Christ is the expression and declaration of the Father—John 1:18**

### **A. As the Son of God, Christ is the issue, coming out, and expression of the Father**

*"As the Son He is the issue, the coming out, of God, and He is also the expression of the Father. Because the Son expressed the Father, the Son is the expression of the Father"* (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 22, p. 236).

### **B. As the Son of God, Christ is in the bosom of the Father and declares the Father**

#### **1. Christ coinheres with the Father and is one with the Father—John 14:10–11**

*When two parties coinhere, it means that they dwell in each other. Christ can be both in the bosom of the Father and declaring the Father because He and the Father are continually coinhering. Thus, when the Son was living on the earth, He was abiding in the Father, and the Father was abiding in Him (John 14:10a, 11a; 17:21). The Son and the Father dwell in each other.*

#### **2. Christ as the Son brings the Father to us and brings us to the Father—John 14:2–3, 23; Eph. 2:18; Heb. 4:14; 7:25**

*Christ's intention is to bring God into us and to bring us into God. He is bringing us into the very relationship that He enjoys with the Father as the Son. In this same relationship, we move and walk with God, we dwell in God, and God dwells in us. It is not enough that God lives in our spirit. He must also make His home in our heart so that every part of our being can be filled with God. Then we can fully express Him as His sons. Jesus Christ was the first one who experienced the Father in such a way (John 1:1), but today there are many sons in whom the Father is dwelling. The Father is dwelling in us, and Christ is continually bringing us further into this relationship with the Father. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we sense that Christ is leading us to the Father to praise Him as His many sons (Heb. 2:12). Eventually, we will all express our Father fully and will enjoy Him in the same manner that Christ does. This is the goal of God's economy.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** God's desire is to have many sons, who are just like His Son, to be His corporate expression. First, however, God had to make Himself known to us. We had no idea who our God really was or what He was after. Creation somewhat tells us what God is like, but God was not fully defined or explained to us until we came to know Christ. Since Christ is the embodiment of all that God is, He is able to communicate all that God is to us. This was the first step. The second step was to bring God's life into us so that we could become God's sons. (God did not adopt us; He made us His real sons.) Now we have not only met God in Christ; we have received Him so that we have become His many sons. Because we understand His purpose, He is no longer mysterious to us, and we can cooperate with Him. Today we are the many sons of God, enjoying God together with Christ. It is so wonderful that



Christ did not keep this relationship with the Father to Himself! He came to make the Father known to us and to bring the Father's life to us.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** The Gospel of John opens by speaking of Christ as the Word of God. Just as our words express and explain our invisible thoughts, Christ as the Word expresses, explains, and defines the mysterious and invisible God. Chapter one of John is the introduction of the entire book, and in this introduction, John shows how Christ expresses, explains, and defines God in the *five greatest events in the history of the universe*. In each event, Christ reveals something great to us. The first great event was the creation of the universe (John 1:3). In this event, Christ's creation tells forth the glory of God and manifests God's divine characteristics (Psa. 19:1–3; Rom. 1:20). Incarnation was the second great event (John 1:14), by which Christ unveils that God intends to be one with His creatures by bringing God into man and mingling divinity with humanity. By Christ's becoming the Lamb of God (the third great event—John 1:29), Christ speaks of how God accomplished redemption through His death judicially for man as the procedure according to His righteousness. By Christ becoming the life-giving Spirit as the dove (the fourth great event—John 1:32–34), Christ unveils that God carries out His economy by imparting His divine life into man. In the last great event, the event of Christ as the Son of Man being the heavenly ladder to bring heaven to earth and join earth to heaven, Christ speaks to us of how God desires to be joined with humanity to have a habitation for eternity (Bethel—John 1:51; Gen. 28:11–22). In creation, in incarnation, in being the Lamb, in becoming the Spirit, and in being the ladder that brings God to man, Christ as the Word of God explains the mysterious God in full. Whoever would receive this marvelous Christ receives the authority to become a child of God, born of God (John 1:12–13) to be a member of God's house. (See *Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John*, Message 1.)

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.); Knowing that God is Triune (II.A.1.)

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 22.

**REFERENCES:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 22; *Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John*, Messages 1–4; Message 5, pp. 57–61; *Life-study of John*, Messages 2–3; *God's New Testament Economy*, Chapter 2; *The Mysteries in God's New Testament Economy*, Chapter 1, pp. 23–24; *Life-study of Colossians*, Message 18; *The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity*, Chapter 12, pp. 119–124; *Basic Training*, Message 1, pp. 6–7; *Living In and With the Divine Trinity*, Chapter 1, pp. 8–9; *The Full Knowledge of the Word of God*, Chapter 1, pp. 17–18; *The History of God in His Union with Man*, Chapter 1, pp. 8–10.

## Lesson 9—Christ in God's Economy

**OBJECTIVE:** To help the young people see that in God's economy, Christ is everything.

**SYNOPSIS:** God's economy, simply stated, is His plan to dispense Himself into His chosen people for the producing of the church. In such an economy, Christ does everything and is everything. In this lesson, we will see that in God's economy, Christ is four things: He is the Anointed One who carries out God's economy; He is the preeminent One who has the first place in God's economy; He is the Head of all things in God's economy; and He is the center of God's economy. No one can carry out God's economy except Christ. No one has preeminence in God's economy but Christ. No one heads up all things in the universe but Christ, and only He is the center of God's plan. For this reason, in God's economy, Christ is everything. May we all be like the apostle Paul who determined to know and experience nothing other than the all-inclusive and excellent Christ in God's economy (1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 3:8–10).

**CHAPTER(S):** John 1.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*The Bible, with its sixty-six books, speaks a great deal about a number of different topics. It speaks of law, history, battles, genealogies, parables, stories, and morality. But in actuality, the Bible only stresses one thing—God's eternal economy. Throughout church history, many believers have misaimed from this central point in God's Word and taught different things (1 Tim. 1:4–6). But the focus of the teaching in the Bible is God's economy. Furthermore, the Bible clearly shows that the center, reality, and goal of this economy is the all-inclusive and excellent Christ. Christ fulfills God's economy, Christ is preeminent in God's economy, Christ heads up God's economy, and Christ is the center of God's economy. The goal of this lesson is to direct our attention to the all-inclusive Christ in God's economy.*

#### I. God's economy is His plan to dispense Himself into His chosen people—1 Tim. 1:3–4

*In 1 Timothy 1:3–4, Paul told Timothy to "charge certain ones not to teach different things, nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith." Here, Paul speaks of a very important matter in the entire Bible—God's economy. In eternity past, before God created anything, God had an eternal purpose according to His heart's good pleasure. This eternal purpose was to have the church as His Body to be His corporate expression. God's economy is simply the way God fulfills this purpose. Simply stated, God's economy, or God's way to fulfill His purpose, is to dispense Himself into us. From Genesis to Revelation, God fulfills His purpose by dispensing Himself into His chosen people. The entire Bible only speaks of this one thing.*

##### A. "Economy" means household law, household management

*The word "economy" often confuses the young people. When traced back to its Greek origin, it has a simple definition. It comes from the Greek word, "oikonomia" composed of "oikos" (meaning house) and "nomos" (meaning law). Together, the word means household law or household management. Each of us lives in a household that operates under a kind of household management or household arrangement. Without such an arrangement in our household, nothing would get accomplished and no one would get fed.*



**B. "Economy" denotes the distribution of the wealth of a rich household**

The word "economy," which means household management, denotes the management and distribution of the wealth of a rich household. Joseph, in the Old Testament, is an example of one who managed the distribution of food. Pharaoh's household was so wealthy that it had enough grain to supply other nations (Gen. 41:46–57), and Joseph managed and distributed this food to the nations during the time of famine. The distribution of this wealth required proper management and arrangement. This illustration helps us to see that economy is the household management for the distribution of the riches of a wealthy household. Our Father has a great house with a vast store of the unsearchable riches of Christ. This great house needs some administration to dispense these riches into God's people for the producing of the church as the corporate expression of Christ.

**C. God's economy is to dispense Himself into us to produce the church**

"God's economy, therefore, is His household administration to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen people so that He may have a house, a household, to express Himself, which household is the church, the Body of Christ" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 24, p. 258). Help the young people treasure this term "dispense." A mother in a kitchen has one desire—to dispense the food into the members of the family. The wealth of food in the refrigerator is cooked and set on the table for the one reason of being dispensed into the family members. No matter how good the arrangement of the food, if it is not dispensed into the family, the family remains hungry. The biggest tragedy that could ever happen is for the young people to merely understand the word "economy" but not enjoy the dispensing of God into them for the satisfaction of their hunger and the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (See The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity, Chapter 5, pp. 45–46). Our reading of the Bible, our meeting with the saints, our singing together, our fellowship with one another, our gospel preaching, and our prayer should all be an enjoyment of God's dispensing.

**II. In God's economy, Christ is:**

Having seen that God's economy is to dispense Himself into us for the fulfillment of His purpose, we must realize that in this economy, Christ is everything. He is the anointed One to carry out God's economy. He is the preeminent One to have the first place in God's economy. He is the Head of all things in God's economy, and He is the center of God's economy. From this we see that Christ is so much in God's economy. Without Him, there would be no way for God to dispense Himself into us for the fulfillment of His purpose.

**A. The anointed One—He is appointed to carry out God's economy—John 1:41**

John 1:41 says, "He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ)." Messiah is a Hebrew word (Dan. 9:26) and Christ is the Greek translation (Matt. 16:16); both words mean "the anointed." Christ is the anointed One. He has been anointed and appointed by God to carry out God's economy. In the Old Testament, anyone who was used by God to carry out His administration had to be anointed. For this reason, the kings, priests, and prophets were anointed to carry out their function before God. Christ is the anointed One who has been appointed to carry out God's economy which is to dispense Himself into us. He has been commissioned by God to dispense the Triune God into us for the producing of the church. Through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension Christ carried out His commission so



that God could be dispensed into us. In John 4, the Lord carried out this commission by dispensing the living water to the Samaritan woman. As the Christ, the anointed One, He accomplished God's will to satisfy the thirst of the immoral woman (John 4:24–26, 34). This should give us a new appreciation of Christ. His commission, His "job" is to dispense God into us.

**B. The preeminent One—He has the first place in all things—Col. 1:18**

Christ is not only the anointed One to carry out God's economy but He is also the preeminent One in God's economy. Colossians 1:18 says that Christ has the first place in all things. If we would see that Christ occupies the preeminence, the first place in all things, then our living would be revolutionized. He must have the first place in our home life, our school life, our dress, our hairstyle, our decisions, and our future plans. Nothing and no one should occupy the place of preeminence in our life, but Christ. Whenever we come back to the Lord to give Him the first place in all things, we are restored to Him as our first love (Rev. 2:4).

**C. The Head—He heads up all things in God's economy—Eph. 1:10, 22**

In God's economy, Christ is not only the Anointed One and the preeminent One, but He is also the Head of all things (Eph. 1:22). Ephesians 1:10 shows that God's economy is "to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him." When man fell by being seduced by Satan, Satan was injected into man as the factor of death causing man and the entire universe to fall into a heap of collapse. As a result, today there is no proper headship, no real harmony, and no real peace. Nations fight against nations, students fight against teachers, and family members fight against one another. The universe is in a heap of collapse due to the death factor that has been injected into mankind. God's economy is to head up all things in Christ by "dispensing...the abundant life supply of the Triune God as the life factor into all the members of the church that they may rise up from the death situation and be attached to the Body" (Eph 1:10, footnote 1). The heading up of all the members by the life supply is illustrated by the rising up of the army of Israel through the breathing of life into the dry bones in Ezek. 37:4–10.

**D. The center—He is the center of all things in God's economy—Col. 1:17**

Christ is the anointed One to carry out God's economy, the preeminent One in God's economy, the Head of all things in God's economy, and the center of all things in God's economy. All things cohere (are held together) in Christ; He is the center that holds all things together, just as the "hub" holds all the spokes of a wheel together. Christ in God's economy is the "hub" of the entire universe! What a Christ we have! God's economy is to dispense Himself into us to make us His corporate expression. For the accomplishment of such a purpose, Christ is and does everything in God's economy.

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** The young people may have heard terms such as "God's eternal purpose," "God's good pleasure," and "God's economy," but may know these as mere terms. Lesson 1 of *Salvation: A Lesson Book* provides a good overview of this matter. God, when He was all alone, had a good pleasure. We may say that at that time there was something which made God happy and put a smile on God's face. We all have a good pleasure and a heart's delight. According to this good pleasure, God made an eternal purpose, and an economy (a plan) to arrive at this purpose. With this in view, He created the billions of items in the universe with



man as the center for the purpose of dispensing Himself into man to gain the church as His corporate expression.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** What is the center of your life? The center of a thing provides it with its strength and stability. Everything revolves around and attaches to its center. Not only so, the center of a thing also gives it its shape and its expression. Have you ever considered what the center of your life is? Many young people these days take computers, video games, sports, clothes, friends, or even success in school as the center of their lives. Although these things may provide momentary excitement or support, they are not worthy of being your center. You were meant for a much higher purpose, living, and expression than any of these things can offer, and you have a much greater need which these things cannot satisfy. What is this great need? The Bible says that all men have sinned and that the wages (penalty) of sin is death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Your need is that the penalty of sin, which is death, be paid. Can you pay it, or can anything that you had previously hoped in pay this debt for you? No, not even the best education can meet this demand. However, the Lord Jesus has already paid the price of death for you (Gal. 2:20b). Now all you must do is receive Him and what He has accomplished for you by telling the Lord that you repent from having other things as your center and receive Him as your Savior, your center, your life, and your everything. He desires to forgive your sins (1 John 1:9), save you from death (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23; 8:2), and fill you with Himself (Col. 1:27; Rom. 8:10), giving you the highest life with the highest meaning and the highest expression (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21a). What a wonderful salvation you can enjoy by receiving Christ as your center!

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 24, pp. 257–262.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of Ephesians*, Message 8–10; *Life-study of 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Message 1, pp. 1–2; *Salvation*, A Lesson Book, Lesson 1; *The Centrality and Universality of Christ*, Chapter 1; *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 24, pp. 257–262; *The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity*, Chapter 5, pp. 45–46; *The Economy of God*, Forward; Chapter 1, pp. 7–9; *The Overcomers*, Chapter 2, pp. 31–33.

## Lesson 10—Christ in Creation

**OBJECTIVE:** To show how Christ in creation is both the Creator of all things and a creature.

**SYNOPSIS:** Everything that exists in this universe can be classified under two main headings: the Creator and the creation. The Bible, in order to show us that Christ is everything, unveils that He is both the Creator and the Firstborn of all creation. How wonderful is our all-inclusive Christ! As God, He is the Creator of all things. All things were created in Him, through Him, and unto Him. He upholds all things by the word of His power and all things subsist together in Him. As man, He is the Firstborn of all creation and is thus the first among created things. He is both God and man; both the Creator and a creature. This is our Christ!

**CHAPTER(S):** Colossians 1.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*Christ is the central figure of the entire Bible and is revealed in the Word for our experience. Any day that goes by without experiencing Christ is a day spent in vain. But in order to experience Christ, we must first receive a revelation of Him (See The Secret of Experiencing Christ, Chapter 1, pp. 7–8). Paul the apostle first received a revelation of Christ and then was motivated to gain, experience, enjoy, and take possession of Him. In Philippians 3:8 Paul said that he counted all things as loss, “on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” As we cover the Person of Christ in this unit, we are receiving the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. This becomes our motivation to count all things as loss in order to gain and experience Him. In this lesson, we see another aspect of Christ’s wonderful Person. As God, He is the very Creator. As man, He is a creature and is thus a part of creation. No one else in the universe is as all-inclusive as this Christ who is both the Creator and the creature.*

#### I. Christ, as God, is the Creator of all things—Heb. 1:10, 2; John 1:3; Col. 1:16–17

*God is the Creator of all things and since Christ is God, He is also the Creator. Hebrews 1:10 says, “You in the beginning, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands.” Both the heavens and the earth are the works of His hands and everything came into existence through Him.*

##### A. All things came into being through Him as the Word—John 1:1–3

*Christ, as the Word, is the means through which everything came into existence. John 1:3 says that, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not one thing came into being which has come into being.” No one can say that they derive their existence from themselves. Apart from Him, nothing came into being which has come into being.*

##### B. All things were created:

*The following points show that creation is subjectively related to Christ. Christ did not just stand apart from creation and call things into existence. Rather, everything of creation was subjectively related to Him by being created in Him, through Him, and unto Him. As a result, creation expresses the characteristics of Christ including His eternal power and divine characteristics (Rom. 1:20). For this reason, by looking at the visible created things, man can see something of the characteristics of the invisible God. The variety of living organisms, the majesty of the galaxies, and the beauty of creation all express something of*



God and leave man without any excuse. Everyone must believe there is God because creation manifests His characteristics.

**1. In Him—in the power of His Person—Col. 1:16**

*“In Him,” means that all things were created in the intrinsic power of Christ’s person. For this reason, all of creation bears the characteristics of Christ’s power.*

**2. Through Him—through Him as the active instrument—Col. 1:16**

*“Through Him,” means that all of creation was processed through Him as the active instrument. In this process, God’s eternal power and divine characteristics were made manifest (Rom. 1:20).*

**3. Unto Him—unto Him as the goal and consummation—Col. 1:16**

*“Unto Him,” means that Christ is the goal and consummation of all creation. Everything was created for His possession. Since all of creation was created in, through, and unto Christ, all of creation expresses Christ in all of His characteristics. After the universe was created in and through Him, Christ came to earth and was able to point to so many things of creation in order to describe Himself. He used the vine tree, the hen, the Sower, the door, the pasture, the Lamb, the Physician, the Bridegroom, the cloth, the new garment, the best robe, the new wine, the fatted calf, the grain of wheat, and the lightning to all describe Himself. “Because the universe with the billions of things and persons in it was created for the purpose of describing Christ, He, in revealing Himself to His disciples, could easily find in any environment something or someone to serve as an illustration of Himself. The whole universe is a picture of Christ. If we see this, we shall realize how rich, profound, unlimited, and unsearchable Christ is. Truly He is everything to us!” (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 48, p. 522).*

**C. All things are upheld by the word of His power—Heb. 1:2–3**

*After creating all things, Christ upholds all things by the word of His power. People say that “something” is upholding the universe, but are not aware that this “something” is the very Christ who upholds all things by the word of His power. If He can uphold the universe, surely He can uphold your family life, your Christian life, and your church life. Today He is our life to uphold us in every way.*

**D. All things subsist together in Him as the hub—Col. 1:17**

*Colossians 1:17 says that, “all things cohere [subsist] in Him.” “To cohere in Christ is to exist together by Christ as the holding center, just as the spokes of a wheel are held together by the hub at their center” (Col. 1:17, footnote 2). The word “subsist” includes the meanings “to exist,” “to live,” and “to live together.” Christ is the holding center of the universe by which all things exist, live, and live together. In this age, many marriages, families, friendships, and partnerships have fallen apart because many do not know Christ as the holding center of the universe. He is the hub that enables us to exist, live, and live together with others. If we ever feel that we are unable to live together with others, we should come to Christ and acknowledge Him as the hub and holding center of our every relationship.*

## II. Christ, as a man, is a creature being the Firstborn of all creation—Col. 1:15

*Christ is not only the Creator; he is also the Firstborn of all creation. As the Creator, He is the very God without beginning and without ending. As the Firstborn of all creation, He was created and thus has a beginning. He was incarnated to become flesh (John 1:14), He was born as a child (Isa. 9:6), He lived as a genuine man on earth (1 Tim 2:5), He died on the cross with created blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14), He resurrected and ascended as a man (Acts 7:56), and will return as a man (Matt. 26:64). Despite the wrong teachings that have denied that Christ was a genuine man, the Bible says clearly that Christ is not only the uncreated God but also a created man.*

### A. He shares in created blood and flesh—Heb. 2:14

*“Blood and flesh” are created things. Christ, as a man, partook of blood and flesh. If He were only God, He could not have died on the cross to shed human blood for the sins of humankind. His death as a genuine man qualified Him to be the Lamb of God to shed His blood to take away the sins of fallen mankind.*

### B. He is the first among created things and has the preeminence in all creation—Col. 1:15

*The phrase “Firstborn of all creation” implies that Christ has the preeminence in all creation. He is the first of all created things, the first of all creatures. We may wonder how this could be. Wasn’t Christ born only 2000 years ago? How could He be the Firstborn of all creation? The answer is that with God there is no time element. According to His eternal view, Christ was born before the foundation of the world and Christ was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). What a wonderful Christ! He is both the Creator and the Firstborn of all creation. May the excellency of the knowledge of this Christ attract us all to experience Him in many ways. Because of Him, we have existence. Because of Him, we are upheld in all things. Because of Him, we subsist in Him as the hub and can corporately exist together with others. And because of Him, we have a full redemption accomplished by the shedding of human blood. No one is like Him, and for this reason, we should give Him preeminence in all things.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** The earth is a marvel that gives undeniable proof of God’s existence. Upheld seemingly by nothing, positioned perfectly away from the sun (to prevent life on earth from freezing or burning), rotating methodically every 24 hours, and orbiting yearly every 365 days, the earth stands as a wonder of wonders. When we look at the earth and all of its created things, we see something of God’s eternal power and divine characteristics (Rom. 1:20). After looking at the earth, no one can rightfully say that there is no God. Creation leaves man without excuse. Furthermore, by looking at all the created things on the earth, we can see something of what God is like. Because of all the living things on earth, we know that God is a God full of life. Because of the beauty of all the created things, we know that God is a God of beauty and splendor. And because of the perfect order of all the created things (such as our human body), we know that God is a God of order. What a wonderful God we have. (See Romans 1:20, footnote 2).

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** *The Mystery of Human Life*, pp. 4–6, opens by describing God’s creation. Like nothing else, God’s creation unlocks the mystery of human existence, revealing why man is alive on earth. Four verses in the Bible unveil how God created man and why He created man in the way He did. Genesis 1:26a says, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” God created man in a way that was different than every other creature—He



created man in His image. Just as a glove was made in the likeness of a hand to contain a hand, man was created in the image of God to contain God. Then Romans 9:23–24 says that God “might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy...*even us*.” God created us as vessels to contain Him. Just as bottles were made to contain water, we were made to contain God. It is for this reason that many things that we take into us cannot satisfy us, for we were made for the one purpose of containing God. Lastly, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, “...may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete....” This verse shows that as a vessel, we were made with a body (to contact the physical world), a soul (to contact the psychological world), and a spirit (to contact God). God created us with the purpose that we would contact and contain Him in our spirit. “This is the purpose of human existence! You are not merely created to contain food in your stomach, or to contain knowledge in your mind, but you are created to contain God in your spirit” (*The Mystery of Human Life*, p. 6).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 25; *The Experience of Christ*, Chapter 13, pp. 111–112.

**REFERENCES:** Colossians 1:17, footnote 2; *Life-study of Colossians*, Message 8, pp. 66–70; Romans 1:20, footnote 2; *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 25; Message 48, p. 522; *The Experience of Christ*, Chapter 12, p. 108; Chapter 13, pp. 111–112; *The Secret of Experiencing Christ*, Chapter 1, pp. 7–8; Chapter 2, p. 24; *The Triune God and the Person and Work of Christ*, A Lesson Book, Lesson 13, pp. 67–68; *The Mystery of Human Life*, pp. 4–6.

## Lesson 11—Christ in Incarnation: God Manifested in the Flesh

**OBJECTIVE:** To understand that Christ was the embodiment of the entire Triune God and that in Him divinity and humanity were mingled in one Person.

**SYNOPSIS:** In the incarnation, Christ is God manifested in the flesh. He was manifested in the flesh not only as the Son but as the entire God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Through incarnation Christ became the God-man, the One who is the complete God and the perfect man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, having the divine essence, and He was born of a human virgin, having the human essence. In Him as the God-man, divinity and humanity were mingled together and God's purpose was fulfilled in a man.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew 1, Luke 2, John 1.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*The incarnation of Christ was a great event in the universe. Apparently it was just another birth among so many other births taking place on earth, but the birth of Jesus was extraordinary and wonderful to the highest degree, for through this conception and birth God became mingled with humanity and was born into humanity to be a human being. It was not even merely the birth of a savior for mankind; it was the birth of the entire Triune God into man.*

#### I. Christ's incarnation was the manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:16

*When God entered into the womb of the virgin, Mary, He entered into a process that would fulfill His eternal purpose. On the one hand, once He became involved with man in this way, He could never uninvolve Himself; He could never back out. On the other hand, He was "pleased as man with man to dwell" (Hymns, #84), for it was His deep yearning and good pleasure to become one with man.*

##### A. The entire Triune God was involved in the birth of Jesus Christ

*It is not that the Son came into existence at the time of His incarnation, nor is it that the Son alone came to be incarnated. All Three (the Father, the Son, and the Spirit) were involved in Christ's incarnation.*

##### 1. Jesus was born the Son of God—Luke 1:35

*All genuine Christians recognize that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The birth of Jesus was the coming of the Second of the Trinity into humanity. This is mysterious, for, as shall be seen in the following points, His birth had the First (the Father) as its source and the Third (the Spirit) as its means.*

##### 2. Jesus was sent from-with the Father—John 8:16, 29

*On the one hand, the birth of Jesus was the incarnation of the Son. On the other hand, His coming was the Father's coming. He was sent by the Father (Gal. 4:4), yet the One who sent Him was with Him (John 8:29; see also John 1:14, footnote 5). Isaiah 9:6 tells us plainly that the child born and the son given would be called the eternal Father. Jesus Himself said that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father (John 14:9), therefore He was the embodiment of the Father. How, or when, did this visible embodiment take place? It was through the process of incarnation, which began with Jesus' conception and birth. Christ's incarnation was the Father's*



coming as well. *"The Father not only comes with the Son, but after the Son comes to live and work on the earth, the Father lives with Him and works with Him. When He lives, the Father lives."* (The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity, Chapter 11, p. 110). *"John 6:46 says, 'Not that anyone has seen the Father, except Him who is from God, He has seen the Father.' The Greek preposition translated 'from' is para. Here the sense of this preposition is 'from with.'...While He is from God, He is still with God (John 8:16, 29; 16:32). In these verses the Lord seemed to be saying, 'I come from with My Father. When I come from My Father, I come with Him'"* (The Spirit and the Body, Chapter 4, pp. 40–41). The Son was "sent" by His human birth. From His birth, Jesus was "from-with" the Father.

### 3. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit—Matt. 1:18, 20

*Although He was sent from-with the Father, He was born of the Holy Spirit. "When the Son became incarnated to be the embodiment of God, He did so by the Spirit" (The Divine Economy, Chapter 6, p. 44). So one could say of the incarnation of Jesus, "The Spirit came in, the Son came out, and His name was called the Father!" This surely is mysterious, but it is a wonderful reality.*

### B. Jesus Christ was the embodiment of the entire Triune God—Col. 2:9

*"First, in the Godhead our Christ is the complete God. For Christ to be the complete God means that He is the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Those who argue with this and say that Christ is only the Son are mistaken. On the one hand, the New Testament reveals that Christ is the Son; on the other hand, the New Testament reveals that Christ is God, even the complete God. We should not say that Christ is only partially God. On the contrary, He is the entire God, the whole God, the Triune God" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 21, p. 224). When Christ was incarnated, the entire Triune God became a man.*

## II. The incarnation of Jesus Christ was a mingling of divinity with humanity which produced a God-man

*The mingling of the divine element, essence, and nature with the human element, essence, and nature in the womb of Mary produced Jesus, a God-man.*

### A. In Jesus Christ, the divine and human natures are mingled together in one Person—Luke 1:35

*"God and man...are united, joined, and even mingled in the person of Jesus. God and man became one person—our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ" (The Divine Economy, Chapter 6, p. 45).*

### 1. Through His incarnation, divinity was brought into humanity and became one with humanity

*"This was the most extraordinary and special conception in all of history—a conception of God with man. In the human conception, there is only one kind of essence—the human essence. But the conception of Jesus was of the divine essence and the human essence. Jesus was born of two elements—the divine element and the human element. Thus, He possessed two natures—the divine nature and the human nature. He was the complete God and the perfect man, a God-man. In Him God and man joined together and became one." (The Divine Economy, Chapter 6, p. 45).*

**2. Divinity and humanity were perfectly mingled together in the Person of Jesus Christ**

*The picture in the Old Testament is that of fine flour mingled with pure beaten olive oil (Lev. 2:4–5). These two elements mingle together in a very fine and complete way. In the same way, divinity and humanity are mingled together in Jesus Christ. In Jesus, the divine attributes and the human virtues correspond perfectly and completely. In every part of His humanity you can find God.*

**3. In Jesus Christ these two essences were distinct, yet not separable, and did not combine to form a third essence or substance**

*In the early centuries of the church, a number of different heretical teachings concerning Christ were being propagated. (Some of them are still currently being taught among certain heretical groups such as the Jehovah Witnesses and the Mormons). One of these teachings declared that the two natures in Jesus formed a third, new nature, meaning Jesus was a God-man who was neither God nor man. Another teaching stated that He was indeed God, yet He only appeared to become a man, for God would never become one with sinful and fallen mankind. Yet another teaching held that Jesus was not God at all, but a created being (an angel) who became a man to die for us. Still others taught that Jesus and Christ were two separate beings (one divine and one human) who joined at His baptism and separated again at His death. Through much searching in the Word, the early church leaders were able to hold to the true revelation concerning the person of Christ. In Jesus Christ, God and man were joined and mingled together in one Person, yet neither the divine nor the human nature lost their distinct characteristics. The two natures were distinguishable, but they were not separable. After humanity and divinity are mingled together, they can never be separated. Praise the Lord for this! In the conception of Jesus, God fully committed Himself to man in a way in which He and man could never be separated, yet by which both He and man maintain their distinct identities. This is mingling. Hallelujah! This matter should be made crystal clear to the young people. A good illustration is the mingling of the flour and oil in Leviticus 2:4–5. See, for instance, Life-study of 2 Corinthians, Message 38, pp. 334–335.*

**B. As a God-man, Jesus Christ is both the complete God and a perfect man**

**1. God's incarnation produced a God-man—John 1:14**

*"What was conceived was God. What came out was the God-man. The baby Jesus that was in the manger was the mysterious God-man in whom both divinity and humanity are mingled as one" (The Mysteries in God's Economy, Chapter 1, p. 24). God created man to contain and express Him by the process of mingling, and Jesus was the first one to experience this to the full extent.*

**2. This God-man was a typical man in every way, yet without sin—Heb. 2:14; 4:15**

*Jesus was not born as a super-human with a "special edition" body. He was born a typical man. His flesh carried in it the defects accumulated and passed on by all His ancestors from Adam to Mary. Jesus, however, did not have the sin-element in His*



*flesh, even though His flesh carried with it the marks and effects of sin (such as illnesses, weaknesses, imperfections, etc.). He came “in the likeness of the flesh of sin” (Rom. 8:3). Jesus partook of the same blood and flesh that we have, yet He was without sin (Heb. 2:14; 4:15).*

### **III. Such a man was and is able to carry out God’s economy**

*God’s economy is the means by which He accomplishes His eternal purpose. God’s eternal purpose is to have a corporate expression of Himself in man. Such a purpose could only be carried out by a God-man, one in whom divinity and humanity were mingled together in one person. Because Jesus was such a God-man, He was able to carry out God’s economy.*

#### **A. Jesus Christ, as a God-man, died to accomplish a judicial redemption for us—Rev. 5:9–10**

*As a God-man, Christ was able to die a death that terminated the entire old creation and accomplished redemption for all those whom God had chosen to be a part of His corporate expression.*

#### **B. Jesus Christ, as a God-man, released the divine life within Him for the propagation of the divine life into many sons—John 12:23–24; 19:34**

*As a God-man, He was also a grain of wheat that could fall into the ground to die for the releasing of the divine life concealed in His humanity into many other “grains.” If God had not been embodied in Him, there would have been no way for God to multiply Himself into others in such a way.*

#### **C. Jesus Christ, as a God-man, resurrected to become the pneumatic Christ in order to impart Himself as life into His believers—John 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b**

#### **D. Jesus Christ, as a God-man, sits upon the throne of God in glory to express God to the universe and to bring all of His fellow God-men to express God as He does for God’s multiplied glory in eternity—Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Eph. 3:21**

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Begin by describing different ways Christ is described by different teachings. Some say He was only God because He never really became a man (that was just an illusion). Others say He was only a man who died a martyr’s death; He was not God. Still others say that He was an angel who became a man. Yet others say Christ and Jesus were two different persons: Christ was divine and Jesus was human; they just joined together at His baptism and separated again at His death. It is even more common in Christianity to think of Jesus as the Son of God who was just one of the Three who became a man. Even this is not completely accurate. The confusion over Christ’s person should give a good background for this lesson. Then share in a simple way (perhaps from a few verses such as Colossians 2:9 and John 1:1, 14) as to how Jesus was the entire God becoming man. Jesus was a Person who was both God and man, someone who had both divinity and humanity. It would be good to share again what mingling signifies by giving some examples, such as the mingling of tea with water or oil with flour. Mingling means that both natures are blent together so that they cannot be separated, yet each still remains distinguishable. In Jesus God and man were blended together in one Person.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** Because the Lord Jesus was God manifested in the flesh and the mingling of divinity with humanity, He was a person of two statuses. He was the Son of Man in His humanity to cherish people, and He was the Son of God in His divinity to nourish people. In His humanity, He cherished people, making them happy and giving them the feeling

that He was so pleasant and so easy to contact. Yet, He was also the Son of God, and thus could nourish others with His divine life. If He was only the Son of God and not the Son of Man, no one would feel comfortable approaching Him. Yet if He was only the Son of Man and not the Son of God, He could not minister the divine nourishing life supply for man's liberation from sin. In John 8:3–11 we see how the Lord, in His two statuses, cared for the need of a sinner. Having been caught in the act of adultery by the condemning Pharisees, a woman was brought to the temple where the Lord was teaching. After exposing her accusers of their disqualification for stoning her (since they were not without sin), the Lord as the Son of Man (who *was* without sin) said to the woman, "Neither do I condemn you" (John 8:11m). By this He cherished her. Then as the Son of God and the great I Am, He said, "Go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:11b). With His divinity He nourished her with the freedom from sin and enabled her to sin no more (John 8:24, 34–36). We all need this wonderful Person who is both the Son of Man in His humanity and the Son of God in His divinity. Only He can cherish you in your sinful, condemned state, and only He can nourish you with freedom from sin. We can receive His cherishing and nourishing by confessing that we are sinners and by believing into Him to receive His divine life.

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 26.

**REFERENCES:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 26; *The Divine Economy*, Chapter 6; *Living In and With the Divine Trinity*, Chapter 1, pp. 10–11; *Christ Revealed in the New Testament*, Chapter 1, pp. 10–14; *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 5, pp. 57–60; *Life-study of John*, Message 3, pp. 30–33; *The All-Inclusive Spirit of Christ*, pp. 3–12; *The Vital Groups*, Message 9, pp. 80–82; Message 10, p. 100.



## Lesson 12—Christ in Incarnation: The Son of Man

**OBJECTIVE:** To show that through incarnation the Triune God has joined Himself to and mingled Himself with a genuine man.

**SYNOPSIS:** In Lesson 11 we saw that Christ in incarnation is the Son of God. Now we see that in His incarnation Christ also became the Son of Man, a genuine man who was limited by time and space just like us. For Christ to be both the Son of God and the Son of Man indicates that through His incarnation Christ brought the infinite God into finite man. Through His incarnation He made God one with man and mingled divinity with humanity. In His incarnation, Christ also united and mingled the Triune God with the tripartite man.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew–John.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*Christ in incarnation is both the complete God and the perfect man; He is one person with two natures. Viewed from the side of divinity, Christ is God Himself manifested in the flesh. Viewed from the side of humanity, Christ is a real man who has the Triune God joined and mingled with Him. To say that Christ is the Son of Man emphasizes the fact that He is a man. For Christ in incarnation to be the Son of Man indicates that divinity has been brought **into humanity**; it points out to us the union of the Triune God with a genuine man. Christ was a real man, limited by time and space, but a man to whom the infinite God had joined and mingled Himself.*

#### I. In His incarnation Christ became the Son of Man—Matt. 16:13

*In Matthew 16:13 and in dozens of other verses, the Lord Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man. By doing this, the Lord emphasized the fact that He was a real man. He was a finite man, limited by space and time, and He was a genuine man, with the genuine human nature.*

##### A. He was a finite man, limited by space and time—John 7:6a

*In incarnation Christ became a finite man, limited by time and space. He did not just appear on the earth, but instead was conceived in a human womb and remained there for nine months before being born as a man. Later, as He grew up, He needed to work for a living. He needed to walk to get from village to village. He lived under the law given by God. On occasion, He wept. He was even so limited that He was able to be crucified by other men!*

##### B. He was a genuine man with the genuine human nature

*The Lord was also a genuine man with the genuine human nature. He looked just like us. He needed to eat, drink, and sleep just like us. He had the human life and human nature, and grew up as a man of flesh, just like us.*

#### II. In His incarnation Christ brought the infinite God into finite man

*Consider for a moment this wonderful fact. The infinite God, who is unlimited, eternal, unbounded, and immeasurable, became a finite man. None of us like limitation, but in His incarnation Christ brought the infinite God into a finite, limited man.*

##### A. In His incarnation Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of Man

*Because the Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit, He is the Son of God. Because He was also conceived in and born of a human virgin, He is the Son of Man. On the divine*

side, Christ is the Son of God. On the human side, He is the Son of Man. Since the Lord Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man, sometimes He indicated to others that He is the Son of God, and at other times, that He is the Son of Man.

1. **Because the Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit, He is the Son of God—Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35; John 5:25; 9:35, 37; 10:36**
2. **Because He was also conceived in and born of a human virgin, He is the Son of Man—Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:27, 30–31; John 1:51; 3:14; 5:27**

**B. For Christ to be both the Son of God and the Son of Man indicates that through His incarnation He brought the infinite God into finite man**

*As the Son of God, He is the infinite God. As the Son of Man, He is a finite man. In His incarnation, Christ brought the infinite God into finite man. He brought divinity into humanity. Viewed from the perspective of God, Christ is the Triune God manifested in the flesh. Viewed from the perspective of man, He is a real man limited by time and space. However, the infinite God has entered into and been joined with this limited man! Christ is a man who is the union of God and man; He is a finite man who has been joined to the infinite God.*

**C. Through His incarnation, Christ made God one with man and mingled God with man—John 1:1, 14**

*Christ's incarnation brought God into man. How significant this is! In Christ's incarnation, God joined Himself with man and mingled Himself with man. After Christ's incarnation, there was a man on the earth who was joined to and mingled with the very Triune God! God had become one with man!*

**III. In His incarnation Christ united and mingled the Triune God with the tripartite man**

**A. Concerning the Triune God, the Father is the source, the Son is the expression, and the Spirit is the entering in—2 Cor. 13:14**

*The one who joined Himself to man in Christ was the very Triune God. However, God's intention is not just to get into one Man, Jesus Christ. His intention is to get Himself into all of us! In order to get Himself into man, God must be triune. In the Triune God, the Father is the source, the Son is the expression, and the Spirit is the entering in, so that God can become one with us and mingle Himself with us.*

**B. Concerning the tripartite man, the spirit is the innermost part, the soul is in the middle, and the body is on the outside—1 Thes. 5:23**

*The man with whom God wants to join and mingle Himself is a tripartite man. God created man with three parts—spirit, soul, and body—to contain and express Him. First Thessalonians 5:23 "strongly indicates that man is of three parts: spirit, soul, and body. The spirit as our inmost part is the inner organ, possessing God-consciousness, that we may contact God (John 4:24; Rom. 1:9). The soul is our very self (cf. Matt. 16:26; Luke 9:25), a medium between our spirit and our body, possessing self-consciousness, that we may have our personality. The body as our external part is the outer organ, possessing world-consciousness, that we may contact the material world. The body contains the soul, and the soul is the vessel that contains the spirit. In the spirit, God as the Spirit dwells; in the soul, our self dwells; and in the body, the physical senses dwell" (1 Thes. 5:23, footnote 5).*



**C. Christ in incarnation is the uniting and mingling of this Triune God with such a tripartite man**

*Before the incarnation, God was God and man was man. God moved among men and His Spirit fell upon men, but never had God and man been united and mingled together. Man was not only united with God, i.e., brought together with Him, but was also mingled with God to be one entity. Christ in incarnation is the uniting and mingling of this Triune God with such a tripartite man. He was a normal man with a spirit, soul, and body, yet with this one the Triune God had been united and mingled. As such, the Lord Jesus was the prototype of a God-man. God wants to join Himself with us and mingle Himself with us after the pattern of Jesus Christ.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** From the very beginning, God's intention has been to become one with man and mingle Himself with man. The real significance of Christ's incarnation as the Son of Man is that the Triune God had finally done so! In Christ's incarnation, God united and mingled Himself with man! Now He wants to continue to dispense Himself into men. On our side, we were created as tripartite beings, having a spirit, soul, and body, so that we could receive God's dispensing. On God's side, He is Triune so that as the Father, Son, and Spirit He can dispense Himself into us.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** From the very beginning, God's intention was to become one with man and mingle Himself with man. However, man fell and became sinful, and for 4,000 years God had no way to get into man. This makes Christ's incarnation so significant! For the first time, at Christ's incarnation, God was able to join and mingle Himself with man. The result was the only perfect human life that has ever been lived on this earth. The good news is that God does not want merely to get Himself into the one Man, Jesus Christ. Through Christ's redemption, He has cleared up the problem of man's sin so that He can dispense Himself into "every one who believes" (John 3:15).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 26, pp. 287–288.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 69, pp. 798–799; *Life-study of Mark*, Message 46, p. 402; *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 26, pp. 287–288; *How to be a Coworker and an Elder*, Chapter 1.

## Lesson 13—Christ in Incarnation: Jesus and Emmanuel

**OBJECTIVE:** To help the young people appreciate the significance of Christ's name in incarnation—*Jesus* (Jehovah the Savior) and *Emmanuel* (God with us).

**SYNOPSIS:** Christ in His incarnation was given two wonderful names that reveal something marvelous about His Person. The name He received from God was *Jesus* which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Joshua, meaning "Jehovah the Savior" or "the salvation of Jehovah". In this wonderful Person we have Jehovah, we have the Savior, we have salvation, and we have the real Joshua who is bringing us into Himself as the good land. The name that He received from men was *Emmanuel* which means "God with us." Whenever we experience Jesus we have the sense that God is with us. May we all come to appreciate the Person of Christ who is not only a man, but Jehovah, and not only Jehovah, but Jehovah as our Savior, salvation, and Emmanuel, God with us.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew 1.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*In His incarnation, Christ was given two names: Jesus and Emmanuel. Both of these names are full of revelation concerning the Person of Christ. The name Jesus means "Jehovah the Savior" and shows that He is the very Jehovah, the very I Am from eternity past to eternity future. The name Emmanuel means "God with us" and shows that He is God Himself. Yet, even more than just being Jehovah and God, His name shows that He is for our experience. As Jesus, He is Jehovah for our salvation and as Emmanuel, He is God not far away from us, but God with us. The burden of this lesson is to bring the young people into an appreciation of these two names and, by this appreciation, usher them into the experience and enjoyment of this wonderful Person.*

#### I. *Jesus is the name that was given to Him by God—Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31*

*When Gabriel appeared to Mary in Luke 1:31, he told Mary that she would conceive and bear a son and that she was to call His name Jesus. Then later, when the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, the angel told Joseph that the child should be called Jesus. Thus, Jesus is the name given to the Lord by God.*

##### A. *Jesus means "Jehovah the Savior" or "the salvation of Jehovah"*

*The name Jesus is rich in meaning and its implications show what a wonderful Person this One is. Jesus means "Jehovah the Savior" or "the salvation of Jehovah." "Jesus is not only a man but Jehovah, and not only Jehovah but Jehovah becoming our salvation" (Matt. 1:21, footnote 1). The following points show the elements that are included in the name Jesus (italicize?).*

##### 1. *He is Jehovah—I Am That I Am—Exo. 3:14*

*Included in the name Jesus is the name Jehovah. The name Jehovah means I Am That I Am, the self-existing and ever-existing One. As such, He is the One who is in the present, who was in the past, and who will be in the future. Jesus is not only a man. He is the very self-existing, ever-existing Jehovah who is the I Am. Everything else in this universe is vain and is not. Only He is, only He exists forever, and only He can say, "I Am." To every need we have, He says, "I Am." If we need life, light, salvation, strength, wisdom, mercy, grace, or love, then He is that very thing to us.*



*He is like a signed blank check that is waiting for us to fill in the amount of whatever we need. If we need one dollar then we fill in one dollar. If we need one billion dollars we fill in one billion dollars. Everything we need can be found in the rich, wonderful name of Jesus.*

**2. He is the Savior and the salvation—Matt. 1:21**

*Also included in the name of Jesus is the meaning of “Savior” and “salvation.” He is not only Jehovah, but He is Jehovah plus something more. He is Jehovah our Savior and Jehovah our salvation. The Jews believe in Jehovah, but they do not have Jehovah as their Savior. We have much more than they do, for we have not only Jehovah, but we have Jehovah as our Savior and salvation. Jesus is Jehovah our Savior, saving us from sin, sins, the world, Satan, bondage, temper, rebellion, and everything we hate. For this reason, whenever a person calls on the name of Jesus, he has a particular sense within. If one calls on the name of “Abraham Lincoln” there is no sense within and surely no experience of salvation. When one calls on the name of Jesus, he has a definite sense within and will experience Jehovah as his Savior and salvation. If we would begin to daily call on this name, we would all be able to testify of how precious it is to experience Jehovah as our Savior and salvation.*

**3. He is our Joshua bringing us into the rest—Heb. 4:8; Matt. 11:28–29**

*Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Joshua. Moses brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness. Joshua brought them from the wilderness into the good land. Jesus, typified by Joshua, brings us into the real rest which is Himself as the good land. When it seems that we have no hope of entering into the enjoyment of Christ as the good land, we should call on Jesus to experience Him as the real Joshua who is well able to lead us into the enjoyment of the land. By calling on His name, we are brought into Christ as our good land and enjoy the sweet taste of all His riches.*

**B. By calling on the name of Jesus we are saved and brought into the rest**

*Hymn #208 says, “O Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord! / Forgive me if I say, / For very love, Thy sacred name / A thousand times a day.” We should call on His name moment by moment to enjoy His dear name in order to experience Him as Jehovah, as our salvation, and as our Joshua bringing us into the good land as the rest. In order to help others to be saved, we must help them to call on the name of Jesus. Then after bringing them into salvation, we should help them daily draw water from the wells of salvation by continually calling on His name (Isa. 12:3–4).*

**II. Emmanuel is the name that He was called by people**

*Jesus is the name given to the Lord by God. Emmanuel is the name given to Him by men (Matt. 1:23).*

**A. Emmanuel means “God with us”—Matt. 1:23**

*Matthew 1:23 says, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel” (which is translated, God with us).” Jesus as our Savior is Emmanuel, God with us. He is the very God incarnated to be a man in the flesh to dwell among us (John 1:14). The more we experience Jesus as our Savior, the more we find that He is the very God with us. We sense that He is not God far away in the heavens having*

*nothing to do with us; rather He is God with us, God close to us, and God for our experience and enjoyment. Do you feel that God is far away from you? If so, you should call on His name to experience and enjoy God with you.*

**B. He is God with us:**

*Several passages show the Lord as our Emmanuel being with us.*

**1. In our gatherings—Matt. 18:20**

*Matthew 18:20 says, "For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst." Whenever we gather into His name with the saints, He is there as Emmanuel, as God with us.*

**2. All the days—Matt. 28:20**

*Matthew 28:20 says, "...And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age." Every day the Lord is with us. We must believe this.*

**3. In our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22**

*Second Timothy 4:22 says, "The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you." The Lord is with us as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit and is the grace in our spirit sustaining us to live in our spirit all the day long.*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Junior high is a good time to be introduced into the wonderful practice of calling on the name of the Lord. Many young people have heard their parents calling on the name of the Lord in their homes and have heard the saints calling in the meetings. However, some of the young people may not have entered into the sweet enjoyment themselves. The little booklet entitled, *Calling on the Name of the Lord*, gives some simple reasons why we should call and the way we should call in order to call effectively. By reading this booklet we can help the young people enter into a healthy practice of calling on the Lord's name. In brief, the *purpose* for calling is 1) to be saved (Rom. 10:13), 2) to draw water from the wells of salvation (Isa. 12:2–4), 3) to be rescued from distress, trouble, sorrow, and pain (Psa. 18:6; 50:15; 86:7; 81:7; 116:3–4), 4) to enjoy His mercy (Psa. 86:5), 5) to receive the Spirit (Acts 2:17a, 21), 6) to eat and drink the Lord (Isa. 55:1, 6), 7) to enjoy His riches (Rom. 10:12), and 8) to stir ourselves up to lay hold of the Lord (Isa. 64:7). The *way* to call is 1) to call out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22), 2) to call with pure lips (Zeph. 3:9), 3) to call with an open mouth (Psa. 81:10), 4) to call corporately (2 Tim. 2:22), 5) to call daily (Psa. 88:9), and 6) to call as long as we live (Psa. 116:2).

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary "will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Two things in this verse are striking. First, His name is called Jesus. The name "Jesus" that was given to the Lord proves that He is more than just a man because Jesus means "Jehovah the Savior." The Jewish people said that He was a carpenter, others said that He was a prophet, and still others said that He was a religious revolutionary. All of these people, nevertheless, considered Him as merely a man. The Bible shows that He was called *Jesus*—Jehovah our Savior. If we would take a moment to consider the extraordinary effect that this One has had on human history and the extraordinary power of the Christian faith, we cannot help but realize that this power comes from the fact that Jesus is indeed God. Even as you listen to His name being spoken, you can't help but wonder regarding the uniqueness of that name. Some feel uneasy when they hear the name of Jesus. Some feel comforted when hearing that name. However, everyone feels something. This is because Jesus is God, Jehovah the Savior. Second, this verse also says that He will save His people from their sins. By His death on the



cross, Jesus shed His blood to release us from the punishment of sin and by His resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit, He releases us from the power of sin and from the continual torment of our sinful living. By confessing that we were born in sin, and confessing that Jesus is Jehovah the Savior to save us from sins (Matt. 1:21), we can receive Him as the Savior (See *Gospel Outlines*, Subject 61).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 5, pp. 60–62; Message 6, pp. 65–67, 75–78; *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 26, pp. 284–287.

**REFERENCES:** *Calling on the Name of the Lord* (booklet), pp. 9–10; *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 5, pp. 60–62; Message 6, pp. 65–67, 75–78; *Life Lessons*, Lesson 7, pp. 45–46; *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 26, pp. 284–287; *Gospel Outlines*, Subject 61.

## Lesson 14—Christ's Birth: Matthew's Account

**OBJECTIVE:** To show the young people how the birth of Christ was prepared by God's sovereignty and carried out through the Holy Spirit for the producing of a God-man.

**SYNOPSIS:** Matthew begins his record of Christ's birth by saying, "Now the origin of Jesus Christ was in this way..." (Matt. 1:18a). No man has ever had an origin like the origin of Jesus Christ. In His sovereignty, God brought Mary and Joseph together in marriage for the bringing forth of Christ. Both of them were the right persons to provide a proper genealogy for Christ and both of them paid a high price to bring Christ forth. Regarding Christ's birth, Matthew says that Mary "was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:18). This means that Jesus Christ was conceived directly of the Holy Spirit to have the divine essence. He was born of a human virgin to have the human essence. In this way, Christ was a God-man possessing both divinity and humanity. The One who was born in this way was called Jesus (Jehovah the Savior) and Emmanuel (God with us). He is Jehovah, He is God, and He is the prophesied King who has come to bring the kingdom of the heavens to earth.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew 1.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*Only Matthew and Luke give an account of Christ's birth. Mark's Gospel of the Slave-Savior doesn't give an account of Christ's birth because no one is interested in the birth of a slave. John's Gospel of the God-Savior also records nothing of His birth since God has no birth and is without beginning. In this lesson and the next, we will cover Matthew's and Luke's account of Christ's unique and marvelous birth. Matthew, in particular, shows how Christ, as a kingly child, was born to be a God-man, possessing both the divine nature and the human nature. It is worth reading Matthew 1:18–25 with the young people. Everything here regarding Christ's birth is enlightening.*

#### I. Christ's birth was prepared and accomplished by God's sovereignty—Matt. 1:16, 18

*"The birth of Christ was prepared and accomplished by God's sovereignty. By His sovereignty God brought back to Judea from the captivity in Babylon the ancestors of both Joseph and Mary under the leadership of their forefather Zerubbabel (Matt. 1:12; Ezra 5:1–2). Again by His sovereignty God placed both Joseph and Mary in the same city, Nazareth (Luke 1:26; 2:4). Even more, by His sovereignty God brought Joseph and Mary together in marriage so that Christ could be brought in as the legal heir to the throne of David" (Matt. 1:25, footnote 1). If Zerubbabel had not returned from captivity, where would Joseph and Mary have been born? Or if Joseph and Mary lived in the good land but in distant cities, how could they have come together in marriage? In His sovereignty, God brought their ancestors back to the good land, placed Joseph and Mary in the same city, and brought them together in marriage to bring forth Christ. Furthermore, it was of God's sovereignty that Joseph and Mary had the proper genealogy for Christ to be the qualified heir to the throne. By Joseph and Mary coming together, Christ was associated to the royal line of Solomon (through His indirect relationship with Joseph) yet was a direct descendant of David through the common line of Nathan (through His direct birth from Mary). Therefore, Joseph and Mary provided Christ with the lineage He needed to be the royal, yet proper legal heir to the throne. Only God could have sovereignly arranged this.*



## II. Christ's birth was through Mary and Joseph's willingness to pay a price

Matthew 1:18 says, "Now the origin of Jesus Christ was in this way: His mother, Mary, after she had been engaged to Joseph, before they came together, was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit." Both Mary and Joseph paid a price to bring forth Christ. Mary was a young virgin who was engaged to Joseph at the time that Christ was conceived in her womb. In order for her to bring forth Christ she had to bear the shame of carrying a child in her womb before she was married. This was surely a shameful experience. Joseph, in like manner, also paid a price when he obeyed the word of the angel of the Lord and took Mary (who had a child in her womb) to be his wife. Both he and Mary suffered the possible misunderstanding of those who observed them, nevertheless, both of them obeyed the Lord's word and were used to bring forth Christ. In order to be those used by the Lord to bring forth Christ to others, we must also willingly pay a price to bear the shame for His sake. We should not expect that others would always agree or admire our life as believers of Christ. Often, we may suffer shame and misunderstanding. Such is the case with those who bring forth Christ and have a living that issues in Christ.

## III. Christ's birth was the birth of a God-man—Matt. 1:18, 20

Matthew 1:18 says that Mary was found to be with child "of the Holy Spirit." Then in Matthew 1:20, the angel of the Lord told Joseph that "that which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit." "God was first born into Mary through His Spirit; after the conception was completed, He, with the human nature, was born to be a God-man, possessing both divinity and humanity. This is the origin of Christ" (Matt. 1:20, footnote 1). No other person was ever born in this way.

### A. Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit to have the divine essence—Matt. 1:18, 20

Matt. 1:18 says that Mary "was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit." This verse shows that Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit to have the divine essence. As a "child of the Holy Spirit" He was born directly of the Holy Spirit. His source was the Holy Spirit and His element was divine (Matt. 1:18, footnote 1). Matthew 1:20 says that "that which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit." This means that God was born into Mary through the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus was God born into the womb of Mary. Both these verses indicate that Christ possesses divinity.

### B. Christ was born of a human virgin to have the human essence—Matt. 1:20

Because Christ was born in the womb of a human virgin, He put on humanity and has the human essence. "Through the virgin Mary He put on flesh and blood, the human nature, taking the likeness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3), the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7)" (Matt. 1:18, footnote 1).

### C. Christ was born a God-man, possessing both divinity and humanity

Because Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence and was born of a human virgin with the human essence, Christ was born a God-man possessing both divinity and humanity. What a wonderful birth! When we received the Lord Jesus, we received this God-man into us. He is the God-man and we, as Christians, are Christ-men. The matter of Christ's birth should not be mere doctrine to us. Rather, our life should be the issue of Christ's incarnation. He was born a God-man. We have received Him and are also God-men. While we are at school in class, students around us should sense that we are young people plus something more. We are young people plus God. Our demeanor,

*deportment, attitude, life-style, speech, and the way we handle situations all testify that we are young people born of God to be God-men (John 1:12).*

#### **IV. Christ, the God-man, is called Jesus and Emmanuel—Matt. 1:21, 23**

*The one who was born in such a wonderful way with two essences is called Jesus and Emmanuel. Jesus means "Jehovah the Savior," or the "salvation of Jehovah." Emmanuel means "God with us." Although Jesus was a man, He was also the very Jehovah for man's salvation and the very God who dwells among man. People may not understand how Jesus is the very God. But whenever a person calls, "Lord Jesus," he has the sense that Jesus is the very Jehovah as his salvation and the very God who is with him. Calling on Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, or George Washington does not give us any kind of sense, but calling on Jesus fills us with the sense that God is with us.*

#### **V. Christ is Jehovah God born in the flesh to be the King—Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:27, 32–33**

*In Matthew, Christ is Jehovah God born in the flesh to be the King-Savior to bring the kingdom of the heavens to the earth. His birth was the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ as the King (Micah 5:2; 2 Sam. 7:12b, 13; Jer. 23:5–6). He is not only Jehovah the Savior, and God with us, He is also the King coming to rule within us. "When we call on Jesus, immediately we have One ruling over us. If you have some unseemly pictures or photos on your walls and you call on Jesus, He will be your King and say, "Get rid of that!" Jesus, the King, intends to establish His kingdom within you and to set up the throne of David in your heart. The more you call on Jesus, the more the ruling power will be there. If you do not believe me, I ask you to try it. Call on the name of Jesus for ten minutes and see what happens. The King will rule over you and bother you" (Life-study of Matthew, Message 5, p. 62).*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** In the events that took place surrounding the birth of Christ, we can see some principles of how God works in the New Testament for the bringing forth of Christ: 1) He works in a small way. God did not send an angel to Jerusalem, the big center of religious worship. He sent the angel to the small town of Nazareth (without any big advertisement). God does not care for things that are done in a great way. We also should not seek after spectacular experiences but should simply care for the daily, ordinary life practices of loving the Lord, reading His word, and attending the meetings faithfully. 2) He went to a young virgin. The Lord uses the young, weak, unloaded, unlearned, and inexperienced ones who are so new and so fresh. We should be like this. 3) He did not tell Mary to do anything. In the Old Testament, there were many regulations and requirements. But in the New Testament, it is not a matter of doing but a matter of conceiving Christ and bringing Him forth. This means we should not care to do so many things but should allow Christ to do something in us. The angel simply told Mary that she would conceive. "And Mary said, Behold, the slave of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word..." (Luke 1:38a). Like Mary, we simply need to cooperate with the Lord and allow the Spirit to do something in us (See *New Testament Service*, Chapters 1–2).

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** The highest point of God's Gospel is that we were created for the purpose of becoming God-men, possessing the divine life and nature. When God created the different animals, He created each animal after its own kind. But when He created man, He created him not after man's own kind but after God's kind. Man was made in God's image (possessing inward parts such as the mind, emotion, and will) and after God's likeness (an outward body that has the form of God). If you looked at the man God created, you would see what God looked like because man was made after God's kind. Then God placed this man in front of the tree of life so that man could take in God's life. God intended that the man not only



have God's image and likeness but would also contain God's life in order to be a God-man. Nevertheless, the man whom God created for His purpose was deceived by Satan and fell away from God. So, after four thousand years, God was incarnated to be a man, making God and man one entity—a God-man. Through His death on the cross, He accomplished a judicial redemption for us and opened the closed way to the tree of life so that we may fulfill the original purpose for which we were created—to contain God as life to be God-men. Those who would believe into Christ become God-men, having not only the human life but also the divine life (John 1:12–13), and become a new kind, the God-man kind. Believing in Christ is not so you would become a good man, an improved man, or a religious man. Rather, it is so you would become a God-man possessing God's life (John 3:15, 36a) and God's nature (2 Pet. 1:4). This is the highest point of God's gospel (See *Life-study of 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Message 4).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 5; Matthew 1:18, footnote 1; Matthew 1:20, footnote 1; Matthew 1:25, footnote 1.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 5; Matthew 1:18, footnote 1; Matthew 1:20, footnote 1; Matthew 1:25, footnote 1; *New Testament Service*, Chapters 1–2; 4, pp. 35–38; *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 84, pp. 903–904; Message 231, pp. 2460–2462; *The Move of God in Man*, Message 2; *Life-study of 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Message 4; *Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, Lesson 3, pp. 30–31.

## Lesson 15—Christ's Birth: Luke's Account

**OBJECTIVE:** To impress the young people with Luke's account of the birth of a most wonderful and excellent person, a God-man who is both the complete God and the perfect man.

**SYNOPSIS:** Many believers are familiar with Luke's account of the birth of Christ and acknowledge His birth as a great thing, but few are clear why it was so great. As we consider the conception and birth of Christ, it becomes strikingly evident that Christ's birth was the birth of a God-man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit to have the divine essence and He was born of a human virgin to have the human essence. As a result, Christ is a Person of two sources and two essences, making Him a God-man who is both the complete God and the perfect man. He was born in the city of Bethlehem and then laid in a manger where He began His life in the lowest estate. Nevertheless, the little baby in the manger was "the mighty God" (Isa. 9:6). May we all come to appreciate Christ's birth as the birth of a God-man.

**CHAPTER(S):** Luke 1:26–38; 2:1–20.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*Before speaking the points of this outline to the young people, it may help to first speak the details of Luke's account of Christ's conception and birth given in Luke 1:26–38; 2:1–20. The verses make clear that the conception and birth of this One was unlike any other person's conception and birth. Never before had a child been born who was both the complete God and the perfect man. The two points of this outline stress two things: Christ conception and Christ's birth.*

#### I. Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a human virgin to be a God-man having both the divine and human essence

*When giving the biography of a person, writers never begin by speaking regarding the conception of the person. However, Luke begins his record by speaking not only of Christ's birth but of His conception. Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a chaste virgin to have two essences, the divine essence and the human essence. Such a conception produced the most wonderful and most excellent person of the Lord Jesus, making Him a God-man. (See Luke 1:35, footnote 2.)*

##### A. Christ's conception was of the Holy Spirit in a human virgin—Luke 1:31, 35; Matt. 1:18, 20

*In Luke 1:31, the angel said to Mary, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus." When Mary questioned how this could be the angel answered and said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy thing which is born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). In these verses, we see that Christ has two sources. One source is the Holy Spirit who is God Himself reaching man. From Matthew 1:18, 20 we know that the Holy Spirit did not merely come upon Mary as the power for her to conceive, but that "the divine essence out of the Holy Spirit had been begotten in Mary's womb before she delivered the child Jesus" (Luke 1:35, footnote 2). The other source was Mary, a human virgin (Luke 1:27).. Therefore, Christ who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a human virgin is both divine and human. For this reason, the angel told Mary in Luke 1:32 that Christ is the Son of the Most High and the son of David the king. Christ is the Supreme God in His divinity, and the son of a highly ranked man in His humanity.*



**B. Christ's conception was with God and man as His two essences making Him a God-man**

*Because Christ has two sources, He has two essences and is thus a God-man. "Essence" here is something deeper than "nature" and refers to the intrinsic constituent of a certain substance. We only have one essence since we were conceived of man and born of woman. However, Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit to have the divine essence and was born of a human virgin to have the human essence.*

**1. Christ is a God-man, the mingling of God and man**

*The conception of Christ was the mingling of the divine essence with the human essence to produce a God-man. Every conception is a matter of mingling. According to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, "mingle" means—"to combine or join (one thing with another, or two or more things together), especially so that the original elements are distinguishable in the combination." An example of mingling is when tea is dipped into a cup of hot water. The tea mingles with the water so that you have tea-water. Christ is a Person of two essences mingled together to be a God-man.*

**2. Christ is the complete God**

*Christ's conception was the incarnation of God Himself. Therefore, Christ is God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). He is not part God. He is the complete God.*

**3. Christ is the perfect man**

*Luke's record presents a full picture of the only proper, normal, and perfect man who ever lived on this earth. As such a man, He is qualified to be the Savior of all mankind.*

**II. Christ's birth was a genuine human birth according to the law of God's creation**

*Christ did not suddenly appear on earth as a full grown man. Rather He, as the Almighty God, stayed in the womb for nine months and was born with humanity to be a baby child. Isaiah 9:6 says that the child born would be called the Mighty God. What a wonder!*

**A. Christ's birth was under the reign of Caesar Augustus who decreed a census—Luke 2:1**

*By God's sovereignty, Caesar Augustus decreed the first census for all the inhabited earth, requiring everyone to return and register in his own city. "By this census Mary and Joseph were brought from Nazareth to Bethlehem that the Savior might be born there for the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the place of His birth (Micah 5:2; John 7:41–42)" (Luke 2:2, footnote 1). Without this decree, it may not have been possible for Christ to be born in Bethlehem.*

**B. Christ's birth was in Bethlehem where He was laid in a manger in the lowest estate—Luke 2:7**

*Luke's record is unique in its description of the birth of the Lord in smallness and lowliness. After Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to "her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). Because fallen man was occupied with his busy activities, there was no place for Christ in the inn. Thus He was laid in a manger.*

Hymn #85 describes the wonder of this occurrence when it says, “Lo! In a manger lies the God Almighty.” Isaiah 9:6 says that the child born will be called the Mighty God.

**C. Christ’s birth was announced to the shepherds by an angel—Luke 2:8–12**

*“And there were shepherds in the same region, spending their nights in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night....And the angel said to them, Do not be afraid; for behold, I announce to you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people, Because today a Savior has been born to you in David’s city, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:8, 10–12). “Their work in shepherding the flock (which provided not only food for man but also offerings to God) and their diligence in keeping the night watches qualified them to be the first to receive the good news of the wonderful birth of the Savior, which was announced by the angel” (Luke 2:8, footnote 1). This greatest event in history—the incarnation of Christ—was revealed to some diligent shepherds keeping the night watches.*

**D. Christ’s birth resulted in a multitude of the heavenly army of angels praising God—Luke 2:13–14**

*“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying, Glory in the highest places to God, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure” (Luke 2:13–14). The incarnation of Christ was such a great event that it caused the heavenly army of excited angels to praise God for the birth of the Savior for man’s salvation. Before the incarnation, God was God and man was man, but God had never been brought into man to be mingled with man. The incarnation of Christ was the incarnation of God in humanity to produce a God-man, a Person of two essences mingled together. The angels praised God by saying, “Glory in the highest places to God, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure” (Luke 2:14). Christ’s coming rendered glory to God and brought peace to us on earth.*

**E. Christ’s birth was witnessed by the shepherds and was spoken of to others by them—Luke 2:15–20**

*The angels announced the good news to the shepherds. Then the shepherds came and saw the child and returned “glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen” (Luke 2:20). We also, having heard the good news and having seen the revelation concerning the birth of this God-man, should glorify and praise God. Those who participate in Christmas have no real understanding and appreciation of the intrinsic significance of the birth of Christ. Christ’s birth is not a matter of Christmas (which is false and has its source in pagan practices), nor is Christ’s birth merely a matter of a baby lying in a manger being observed by shepherds. Rather, Christ’s conception and birth involves the mingling of God with man to produce a God-man with the divine essence and the human essence. Such a birth issued in Christ as the only proper and normal man who ever lived on this earth. Adam failed to take in God and live God. Thus he never fulfilled God’s purpose to mingle Himself with man so that man may express Him. However, in the Gospel of Luke, God Himself entered into man, put on humanity, and was born a human child for man’s salvation (Matt. 1:18, 20; John 1:1, 14). No wonder the angels rejoiced!*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Several hymns have been written to show the wonder of God becoming a finite man for our salvation and experience. Hymn #82, stanza 1, says: “Down from



His glory, / Ever living story, / My God and Savior came, / And Jesus was His name. / Born in a manger, / To His own a stranger, / A Man of sorrows, tears and agony." Hymn #84, stanza 2, says: "Christ, by highest heav'n adored, / Christ, the everlasting Lord: / Late in time behold Him come, / Offspring of a virgin's womb. / Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, / Hail th' incarnate Deity! / Pleased as man with man to dwell, / Jesus our Immanuel." Hymn #85, stanza 1, says: "O come, all ye faithful! / Joyfully triumphant, / To Bethlehem hasten now with glad accord; / Lo! in a manger lies the God Almighty." Hymn #501, stanza 1 and chorus, says: "O glorious Christ, Savior mine, / Thou art truly radiance divine; / God infinite, in eternity, / Yet man in time, finite to be. / Oh! Christ, expression of God, the Great, / Inexhaustible, rich, and sweet! / God mingled with humanity / Lives in me my all to be." In each of these hymns we see something of what Christ is to us. Encourage the young people to consider the content, tune, and feeling of these hymns so that they, like the writer, could enter into the same appreciation of Christ as a God-man.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** *Gospel Outlines*, Subject 80, gives a gospel application for Luke 2:8–14. When the angel of the Lord announced the good news, he announced it to shepherds in the field who were keeping the night watches. The field signifies the wilderness of human living; the night signifies the darkness of human living; and shepherding shows what every man needs—he needs shepherding. The birth of the Savior brought this shepherding to mankind. For this reason, the angel said, "I announce to you good news of great joy..." (Luke 2:10m). Then suddenly there was with the angel "a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying, Glory in the highest places to God, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure" (Luke 2:13–14). The Lord shepherds man by taking away his sin that he may have peace, and by imparting his life into man that God may be glorified. The most disturbing thing to man is his sins. Whenever man sins, he loses all peace. However, at the birth of the Savior, the angels proclaimed peace among men, for it is through Christ that man is delivered from sin. In addition, man awaits death. So Christ shepherds man by imparting His life into him that God may be glorified. Thus, with the coming of Christ there is "Glory in the highest places to God, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure" (Luke 2:14). By confessing that we were born in sin and are awaiting death, and by believing into Christ as the Savior, we are delivered from sin and death to obtain peace and to give glory to God.

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 2, Lesson 18, pp. 85–88.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of Luke*, Message 1, pp. 4–5; Message 3, pp. 25–29; Message 6, pp. 47–50; Luke 1:32, footnotes 1–2; 1:35, footnote 2; 2:2, footnote 1; 2:7, footnotes 1–2; 2:8, footnote 1; 2:14, footnotes 1–2; *Hymns*, #82, #84–85, #501; *The Triune God*, A Lesson Book, Lesson 14; *Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 2, Lesson 18, pp. 85–88; Lesson 20, p. 131; *Gospel Outlines*, Subject 80.

## Lesson 16—Christ's Infancy and Youth

**OBJECTIVE:** To use the facts concerning the Lord's infancy and youth to show that He was a real baby and a real boy, and that He grew up in a normal way as a man.

**SYNOPSIS:** Matthew 2 and Luke 2 present the story of the Lord Jesus' infancy and youth. These chapters show us that although Christ was the infinite God, He was also a real man who had to grow and develop in a normal way. As a finite man, He had to pass through the stages of infancy, growth, development, and maturation as a human being. In Matthew 2 the Lord Jesus was sought and worshipped by the Gentile magi; He was envied by Herod; He was taken to Egypt; and He returned to dwell in Nazareth, being called a Nazarene. In Luke 2 He was circumcised, named, presented, and adored. Then He "grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke 2:40). As God, Jesus was omniscient, but as a man, He needed to grow in wisdom. Luke 2:41–52 especially show us the Lord's living as a youth and testifies that "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in the grace manifested in Him before God and men" (Luke 2:52).

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew 2; Luke 2.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*In this lesson we will study the main points in Matthew 2:1–23 and Luke 2:21–52. These two chapters record different incidents concerning the Lord's infancy and youth, and as such, Matthew's record and Luke's record complement one another. Taken together, they demonstrate to us in a striking way that the Lord Jesus was a genuine man. He was born as a real baby; He passed through a normal infancy and childhood; and as a genuine man, He needed to grow and learn in order to develop into a proper human being.*

#### I. The Lord Jesus passed through a normal human infancy as a genuine human baby

*The facts concerning the Lord's infancy in Matthew 2 and Luke 2 show us that the Lord Jesus was born as a genuine human baby. He was circumcised and named on the eighth day according to the law of God (Lev. 12:3) and according to human custom. He was brought to the temple to be presented to God, also according to the law of God (Exo. 13:2; 22:29). As a baby, He was weak and helpless, and needed His parents to take care of Him. Because they feared for His life, His parents were even forced to flee with Him into Egypt! Tell the stories in these verses, pointing out how Jesus was a genuine human baby.*

- A. In His infancy Christ was circumcised, named, and presented to God according to God's law and according to human custom—Luke 2:21–24
- B. As a baby, the Lord was sought out and worshipped by the Gentile magi, and was adored by the serving ones in the temple—Matt. 2:1–12; Luke 2:25–38
- C. Because He was born to be King of the Jews, the Lord was envied by Herod and was forced to flee into Egypt—Matt. 2:2–3, 7–9, 12–18

#### II. The Lord Jesus grew up as a young boy according to the law of human life

*The Lord Jesus did not just appear as a man one day on the earth in order to be our Savior. Rather, He was born as a baby, and passed through thirty years of growth before He came forth to minister (Luke 3:23). His growth as a human being was according to the natural law of human life. As a child, the Lord Jesus did not use His divine omniscience to know all things. He*



*had to learn to walk, He had to learn to talk, and He had to learn to be a carpenter in His father's home. Even concerning the things of God, the Lord had to study and learn (Luke 2:46).*

- A. As a little child, the Lord returned to dwell in Nazareth and grew up there; thus, He was called a Nazarene—Matt. 2:19–23; Luke 2:39–40**

*Although the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem to be the Christ of God (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1, 5–6), He grew up in a despised region. Growing up as a genuine, human, “little child,” the Lord Jesus did not live among high society. Rather, He grew up in a poor home in Nazareth, for which the Jews later despised Him (John 1:46).*

- B. The Lord Jesus “grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him”—Luke 2:40**

*As God, Jesus was omniscient, but as a man, He needed to learn and grow in wisdom.*

- C. As He was growing up, “Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in the grace manifested in Him before God and men”—Luke 2:52**

*Because the Lord Jesus was a genuine and normal human being, He needed to grow, develop, and learn, just as we do. He not only advanced in stature, i.e., grew and developed physically, but as He grew, He also advanced in wisdom. Wisdom is something related to our spirit. The Lord Jesus sought to learn the things of God (Luke 2:46) and He advanced in the wisdom that came from His knowledge of God and the proper exercise of His human spirit.*

- 1. The Lord went yearly to Jerusalem with His family to keep the feasts ordained in the law of God—Luke 2:41**
- 2. At the age of twelve, the Lord Jesus stayed in the temple to seek after God and to be in the things of God—Luke 2:42–49**
- 3. As a proper young man, the Lord Jesus was subject to His human parents—Luke 2:49–51**
- 4. In all these things, the Lord acted in a way that gained the grace manifested in Him before God and men—Luke 2:52**

- III. Although the Lord Jesus was the infinite God, He was also a real man who had to grow and develop in a normal way**

*Although Christ was the infinite God, He was also a real man who had to grow and develop in a normal way. In becoming a man, He took the way God had ordained in His creation for human beings to grow and develop. This was a great limitation to Him. The infinite God became a man who was limited by time and space. The omnipotent, omniscient God became a helpless baby who had to grow to be a man through a process of learning all the things a human being needs to learn according to the law of human life. Furthermore, the creator of the universe became a child who was subject to His parents. He was truly a genuine man!*

- A. He was limited by time and space—John 7:6**
- B. He was limited by the need to learn as a human being—Luke 2:46**
- C. He was subject to His parents and obedient to them—Luke 2:51a**

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** God in His creation has ordained that man needs to learn and develop. Human beings begin their life completely helpless, unable to do anything for



themselves. Human beings need parents and older people to care for them, to train them, and to educate them for about twenty years before they are capable of living on their own as fully independent adults. Even the Lord Jesus, when living as a man on the earth, took this God-ordained way for human development. The proper development of a human being includes physical growth, and also includes a continual process of learning new things and skills. Two things critical to this process of developing as a proper human being are a willingness to be subject to one's parents and elders in order to learn from them, and a willingness to apply one's self diligently to study. In Luke 2, the Lord displayed both these qualities: He was studying diligently in the temple; and He was respectful toward the teachers and subject to His parents. In order for us to develop into proper human beings, we also should take the same way: to willingly subject ourselves to our parents, teachers, and serving ones, and to diligently apply ourselves to study and learn all we can.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** In Matthew 2:1–11, after Christ was born in Bethlehem, magi from the east saw His star at its rising and came to worship Him. The star that they saw represents the living vision that the magi received concerning Christ. We all need a vision of Christ by which we are motivated to seek Him. Unfortunately, the magi had the mistaken concept that Christ would be in Jerusalem. This concept misled them to the religious center of Jerusalem, but Christ was not there. When they got to Jerusalem, Herod, hearing of the birth of Christ, gathered the chief priests and the scribes together who knew according to the Scriptures that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. The magi, corrected by the Scriptures, then went toward Bethlehem and the star reappeared. There they found Christ and worshipped Him as the very God (Matt. 2:11, footnote 2). Afterwards, they departed by another way. We see three types of people in this passage. There was Herod who wanted to destroy Christ (Matt. 2:16), the chief priests and scribes who had no heart for Christ (seen by their not going to Bethlehem to worship Him), and the magi who sought after Christ. What kind of person will you be: an opposer of Christ, a nonchalant listener to Christ's gospel, or a believer into Christ and a seeker after Him? Christ is living and those who see the living vision of Christ must believe into Him to receive Him. Find Him today by confessing your sins, dropping your religious misconceptions concerning Him, believing His Word, and receiving Him as Jesus and Emmanuel (Matt. 1:21, 23).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 7; *Life-study of Luke*, Message 6.

**REFERENCES:** *Life-study of Matthew*, Message 7; *Life-study of Luke*, Message 6; *Finding Christ by the Living Star*; Matthew 2:2, footnote 2; 2:4, footnote 1; 2:9, footnote 1; 2:11, footnote 2; 2:12, footnote 2.



## Lesson 17—Christ in His Human Living

**OBJECTIVE:** To understand how Christ changed His place to become a man, and how He lived a life in humanity as a typical man.

**SYNOPSIS:** In His human living the Lord Jesus was the Son of Man, found in fashion as a man. As a despised Nazarene, He was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter. He took the form of a slave, serving God and men, and He was a faithful witness of God. As such a witness, He lived the life of a God-man, doing God's will, speaking God's word, and carrying out God's work. He lived divinity in humanity, and therefore expressed God in everything He was and in everything He said and did.

**CHAPTER(S):** Mark 10, John 12.

### OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:

*God's desire is to enter into and be expressed through man. Thus, God created man as a vessel to contain Him, but man fell and became separated from God. God Himself, however, became a man in order to die for man (to deal with whatever separated man from God) and became processed (so that He could get into man). God lived the life of a man in order to fulfill His eternal purpose.*

#### I. In His human living the Lord Jesus was the Son of Man, found in fashion as a Man

##### A. Through His birth to a human virgin, Christ became the Son of Man and involved Himself with the human race

*"He was the God of glory. But His incarnation brought Him down from His glory to be a man. He went down to the bottom to belong to the old man. He came in incarnation not to be a part of the new creation, but to be a part of the old creation....In His humanity He was 'according to the flesh,' 'the flesh of sin' in its likeness but without sin (Rom. 8:3b)" (The Crystallization of the Epistle to the Romans, Message 1, p. 8). The genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1) clearly reveals that, though without sin, Christ as the Son of Man was fully involved with the fallen human race. He did not just appear with a body which came about from a separate creation. He acquired His humanity by being born into the human race. God now has a human genealogy! It would be impressive to consider who some of the Lord's "grandfathers" and "grandmothers" were, along with their backgrounds. He was born of a virgin as the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15), yet the flesh He was born with connected Him to and involved Him with the entire fallen human race.*

##### B. Christ emptied Himself, putting aside the expression of His deity, and became in the likeness of men—Phil. 2:5–8

*"In His incarnation Christ emptied Himself by putting aside the form, the outward expression, of His deity and becoming in the likeness of men. He was God with the expression of God. Although He was equal with God, He put aside this equality and emptied Himself by taking the likeness of men. He became a man through incarnation. He did not regard His equality with God as a thing to grasp. Rather, He laid aside this equality and emptied Himself. This does not mean, however, that Christ in His human living was no longer God. It simply means that He put aside His outward expression of God. Although He subsisted in the form of God, He became in the likeness of men and in*

*the fashion of a man. As a result, He had the appearance of a man instead of the expression of God" (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 26, pp. 287–288).*

**C. Christ grew up in a despised region under difficult circumstances—Isa. 53:2**

*Isaiah tells us that Christ had no particular beauty that made Him more desirable than other men. He grew up as a root out of dry ground, meaning He grew up in difficult circumstances (Isa. 53:2). "The Lord was raised in the home of a poor carpenter in the despised town of Nazareth and in the despised province of Galilee. This was the fulfillment of the dry ground in Isaiah" (Life-study of Mark, Message 2, p. 10). As a descendant of David and as heir to his throne, Jesus should have grown up in a palace, but instead He grew up far from Jerusalem as a seemingly insignificant shoot out of the stump of Jesse (Isa. 11:1, see The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 27, p. 294). Jesus, as the son of a carpenter from Nazareth, dwelt in obscurity. It was from such a background that He came forth to minister (John 1:46; Mark 6:3). To most, He did not seem to be the Messiah they were looking for (John 7:41).*

**D. In His human living, Christ took the form of a slave, serving God and man—Phil. 2:7**

*Christ gave up the form of God to take the form of a slave. Logically speaking, it does not seem anyone would choose to become a slave. A slave is one who has no right to do things for himself; he must be attentive to his master and ready to carry out his master's intentions. Jesus was such a Slave for us. On the one hand, He served God as a Slave, fulfilling all that God desired. On the other hand, He served man by taking care of man's need. How lowly He was! In Mark 10:45 the Lord said, "...The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many." The Lord even considered His redemptive death as a service rendered to sinners for their participation in God's economy. Philippians 2:8 also says that the Lord's dying on the cross for us was due to His obedience and His humbling Himself. The Lord, who was God, let go of His place and form as God to take the form of a slave to serve us.*

**E. In His human living Christ was the faithful Witness of God—Rev. 1:5; 3:14**

*Christ as a man was the faithful Witness of God. Everything that He was and did testified God. He was a man in whom God was fully expressed. God's attributes were fully expressed in Jesus' human virtues. All of His actions and words were God's speaking (Heb. 1:1–2). God was displayed in Christ. Anyone who saw Jesus saw God lived out in a man. As such a One, Christ was the faithful Witness of God. He was one who did God's will (John 5:30), spoke God's word (John 14:24), and carried out God's work (John 4:34; 14:10–11). Because He was a God-man, He was able to live out the divine life of God as a man in His humanity.*

**II. Christ lived the life of a God-man to be a pattern and a prototype for all those who would become God-men after Him—Phil. 2:5**

*Paul tells us that we should take Christ's mind as our mind (Phil. 2:5). In all these points Christ is the pattern of how we should live as the many God-men. We cannot, however, live such a life by merely attempting to imitate Christ; we need to allow Christ to dispense Himself into us. Then we will spontaneously be able to live as He lived. "As such a One Christ is being dispensed into us, the members of His Body. If we are under His dispensing, surely we shall be the kind of*



*person He was in His human living. We shall not want to hold a high rank but rather be low in rank and position. Actually, we are not the ones living in this way. This is Christ living in us after being dispensed into us. This is not a matter of following His steps or imitating Him. This is a matter of having Christ dispensed into us and then living Him"* (The Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 27, pp. 298–299).

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** With the junior high saints it might be good to focus on Philippians 2:5–8 as the primary text (along with footnotes). First of all, Christ emptied Himself. He was in the position and form of God, but He did not hold on to that. Instead, He emptied Himself of His form as God to become a *man*. Furthermore, these verses tell us He came in the form of a *slave*. Verse 6 says He was in the form of God. Verse 7 says He took the form of a slave. If we were God, we might consider it more fitting to take the form of a great ruler or hero. The Lord, however, grew up in the most hidden and lowly manner. He lived in Nazareth, a despised place, doing hard labor as a carpenter. His hands were probably callused, and His face and body were probably weathered and worn from hard labor. He put Himself among mankind as a slave. He did not claim His right as God. He did not demand that people bow down to Him or offer things to Him. Instead, He cared for the sick, washed the disciples' feet, and went out of His way to meet people in the lowest condition, such as the Samaritan woman at the well. He did not even react when He was being struck by His captors (His own creatures!) before His crucifixion. He performed His greatest service for us by dying on the cross so that He could become our life. How far down He came and to what degree He humbled Himself! He was equal with God the Father and was enthroned in glory, worshipped by all creation. Yet God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son to die for our sins! Christ became a little man and allowed His body to be nailed to a cross for us. Give the young people some sense of the condescension involved in Christ's incarnation and death. He served us to the uttermost and completed every task asked of Him. On the cross, He could say, "It is finished!" (John 19:30).

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** In the story of Christ's condescension for our redemption, the gospel is told in a most inspiring way. None can fathom the extent to which Christ lowered Himself for us. In this passage in Philippians 2:6–8, "The Lord's humiliation involved seven steps: (1) emptying Himself; (2) taking the form of a slave; (3) becoming in the likeness of men; (4) humbling Himself; (5) becoming obedient; (6) being obedient even unto death; and (7) being obedient unto the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8, footnote 4). "The death of a cross is the climax of Christ's humiliation. To the Jews it was a curse (Deut. 21:22–23). To the Gentiles it was a death sentence imposed on malefactors and slaves (Matt. 27:16–17, 20–23). Hence, it was a shameful thing (Heb. 12:2)" (Phil. 2:8, footnote 4). Why did He lay aside His form as God and take the form of a slave? And for whom did He become obedient unto death—even the death of the cross? Every step of His humiliation was for your salvation; He did it for you. "He left His Father's throne above, / So free, so infinite His grace; / Emptied Himself of all but love, / And bled for Adam's helpless race" (*Hymns*, #296, stanza 3). The greatest love is that Christ set aside all that He had in position and form and took the lowest form, eventually dying the most shameful death for our salvation. God has now highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name. By repenting to receive His forgiveness and by confessing that "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11), we enjoy all that He has accomplished for us in His condescension, and we are saved (Rom. 10:13). (See *Hymns*, #82).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** The Conclusion to the New Testament, Message 27.

**REFERENCES:** *The Conclusion to the New Testament*, Messages 26–27; *Life-study of Mark*, Message 2; *Life-study of Luke*, Message 6; *Life-study of Philippians*, Message 10, pp. 86–90; Philippians 2:8, footnote 4; *Hymns*, #82; #296, stanza 3.



## Lesson 18—Christ's Divine Attributes and Human Virtues

**OBJECTIVE:** To show that Christ's human living as a God-man was the expression of His divine attributes through His human virtues.

**SYNOPSIS:** As a God-man, Christ possessed both the divine attributes and the human virtues. Attributes are what God is. For example, God is love and light, and He is righteous and holy. Man was created in the image of God, thus possessing virtues which correspond to the divine attributes. The human virtues are the "glove," whereas the divine attributes are the "hand" for which the glove was made. As God, Christ has the divine attributes; as man, He has the human virtues. In His living as the first God-man, the "hand" of the divine attributes was expressed in the "glove" of the human virtues. In His human virtue of compassion, for instance, He expressed the divine attribute of compassion. In His person He is the mingling of God and man; in His living He was the expression of the divine attributes in the human virtues. This was the kind of human life that God intended from the very beginning.

**CHAPTER(S):** Matthew–John.

**OUTLINE WITH FACTS TO TEACH:**

**I. As a God-man, Christ possessed both the divine attributes and the human virtues**

*Since the Lord Jesus is a God-man, the mingling of divinity with humanity, He possesses both the divine attributes and the human virtues.*

**A. Divine attributes are what God is**

*Divine attributes are all the inherent characteristics or qualities of what God is. What God is in His being is the sum total of all His attributes. Some of God's primary attributes are that He is love and light, and He is righteous and holy. God is also glorious, powerful, omniscient, omnipresent, mighty, omnipotent, merciful, faithful, truthful, gracious, and full of riches, joy, and peace. These are a few of the many attributes of what God is.*

**B. Human virtues are the moral strengths and admirable qualities of a human being**

*Human virtues are the admirable qualities a human being possesses; they also refer to the moral strengths or capacities that a person has for doing good. For example, love, compassion, courage, justice, honesty, self-control, and generosity are all human virtues. However, these are not just outward behaviors; they are inner capacities to act in a certain way. Because some people are exercised to be compassionate, generous, or honest, they have the moral strength and capacity to exhibit these virtues when the occasion arises. Because human virtues are the capacities to act in a certain way, they are really only a shell, or a "glove," and need the divine "hand" to come in to be the inner reality and strength.*

**C. Man was created in the image of God, thus possessing virtues which correspond to the divine attributes**

*"From the beginning, in the first two chapters of Genesis, we see that man with the human virtues was created by God according to what He is. In particular, since God is light and love and is holy and righteous, He created man according to these attributes. The creation of man in the image of God is described in Genesis 1. We have pointed out that at the time of his creation man did not have the reality of love, light, holiness, and righteousness. The*

reality of these divine attributes is actually God Himself. This means that through creation man had the image of these attributes, but he did not have the reality of them. This was the reason God in Genesis 2 put man in front of Himself as signified by the tree of life, indicating that God wanted man to take Him as his life so that he might have the reality of the divine love, light, holiness, and righteousness. This would enable man to live a life in the highest standard of morality. Although the man created by God failed to live such a life, the Lord Jesus, the Man-Savior, possessing the divine nature and the human nature, lived a life on earth with the attributes of God expressed in the virtues of man. This crucial matter is revealed in the Gospel of Luke" (Life-study of Luke, Message 2, pp. 18–19).

## **II. In His living as a God-man, Christ expressed the divine attributes in the human virtues**

*In Christ's person, He is the mingling of God and man; in His living, He was the expression of the divine attributes in the human virtues. As God, Christ has the divine attributes; as man, He has the human virtues. The human virtues are the "glove"; the divine attributes are the "hand" for which the glove was made. In His living as the first God-man, the "hand" of the divine attributes were expressed in the "glove" of the human virtues. The Lord Jesus expressed God in a human living by His human virtues strengthened and uplifted with the divine attributes. In His human virtue of compassion, for instance, He expressed the divine attribute of compassion. When the Lord saw a widow weeping over the death of her only son (Luke 7:12–14), He was moved with compassion for her, and He came near and touched the bier. What a tender touch! This was His human virtue of compassion strengthened and enriched by the divine attribute.*

**A. As God, Christ has the divine attributes**

**B. As man, He has the human virtues**

**C. In His living as the first God-man, the "hand" of the divine attributes were expressed in the "glove" of the human virtues**

## **III. This was the kind of human life that God intended from the very beginning**

*From the very beginning, God intended that man would live a life that expressed the divine attributes in the human virtues. This is why He created man in His image (Gen. 1:26) as an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7; Gen. 2:7) to contain God as life. This was also why He placed man in front of the tree of life (Gen. 2:8–9) so that He could take God in as life to be the content and reality of man's vessel.*

**A. God intended that man live a life that expresses the divine attributes in the human virtues—Gen. 1:26; 2:7–9**

**B. This life is a life according to the highest standard of morality**

*Here, the word "morality" refers to the most proper kind of human living, the standard of life that God requires and that God intended from the very beginning, in His creation of man. A life in the highest standard of morality is a life in which the divine attributes are expressed in the human virtues. "This morality is a matter of having the human virtues strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes" (Life-study of Luke, Message 10, p. 86).*

**JUNIOR HIGH APPLICATION:** Human virtues are the admirable qualities a human being possesses; they also refer to the moral strengths or capacities that a person has for doing good (See I.B.). Human virtues are strengths that need to be exercised in order to become developed.



If someone does not practice being generous in his daily life, it is not likely that he will suddenly perform some great act of generosity when the need arises. If someone habitually covers up or excuses his mistakes rather than admitting and dealing with them, then he will not be able to suddenly become courageously honest when faced with a great crisis. Junior high is the time when many people decide what kind of person they want to be. Furthermore, junior high school age is the time when many human virtues will be either built up or torn down. However, as believers we realize that our human virtues are really only a "glove," and need the divine "hand" to come in to be the inner reality and strength. (You may wish to bring a glove to the meeting to illustrate to the young people.) As we exercise to build up our human virtues of courage, compassion, honesty, etc., they are strengthened and enriched by our contacting the Lord and allowing Him to come into all the matters of our daily life.

**GOSPEL APPLICATION:** Have you ever considered why man finds within himself an appreciation for such human virtues as kindness, righteousness, courage, valor, endurance, faithfulness, love, and holiness? Few on this earth truly crave wickedness, malevolence, sorrow, gloom, and death. Man, instead, loves righteousness, holiness, love, and light. It is for this reason that we feel happy when someone shows kindness, mercy, and love toward us. It is for this reason that we feel unpleasant when someone is unfair, unfaithful, unkind, and hateful toward us. (Have you ever met a person who becomes happier the more he is unrighteously hated? Probably not.) Why is it that man inherently admires positive virtues? What is the purpose for having these virtues? We find the answer in God's creation of man. Genesis 1:26 says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...." For God to create man in His own image means that He created man with admirable qualities that correspond to the qualities that are in God Himself. God has attributes such as love, light, holiness, and righteousness. When He created man, He created him in His own image to have these same qualities so that man could express Him through his virtues. "Thus, man has the desire to have love, light, holiness, and righteousness, and these virtues are sometimes expressed in his behavior. What man has, however, is only the image and not the reality. Man must receive God as his life and content and then God's love, light, holiness, and righteousness will fill up and enrich the human virtues of love, light, holiness, and righteousness to become the reality" (*Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, Lesson 3, p. 31).

**CRUCIAL MATTERS:** Understanding the basic truths regarding Christ and His person and work in many aspects for our full salvation (II.C.).

**BACKGROUND READING:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Message 61, pp. 655–656; *Life-study of Luke*, Messages 2, 58, 61.

**REFERENCES:** *The Conclusion of the New Testament*, Messages 61–62; *Life-study of Luke*, Message 1, pp. 6–9; Message 2; Message 10, pp. 84–87; Message 15, pp. 129–130; Messages 56–58, 60–61; *Truth Lessons*, Level 1, Volume 1, Lesson 3, p. 31.