



**IS JESUS
THE SON
OF GOD?**

By Gordon Lindsay

CHAPTER 1

Is Jesus Christ the Son of God?

Have you heard the story of a man who wanted to start a new religion? He went to an old master for advice on how he should begin. The master assured him he could show him the way. First, he should write out the precepts of his proposed religion, then deliver them to his followers.

“What should I do next?” the man asked.

The wise man said, “After that, you should allow yourself to be crucified, die and be buried. Then, on the third day you should rise again and appear to five hundred people.”

Needless to say, no mere human could have power over death. However, Jesus Christ does have power over death and evil because He is the Son of God. He came to Earth more than 2,000 years ago in the form of a man and lived 33 years. The last three years, He preached of the love and power of God, healed the sick, blessed those who were oppressed by evil and taught of His heavenly Kingdom to come. He never attempted to set up any type of kingdom on this Earth, for His Kingdom is in the hearts and souls of men.

God created us in His image, and after He created man in the Garden, He breathed life or the spirit into Adam and Eve. When our body dies here on Earth, our soul and our spirit will continue to exist, and we shall go to live in another place—either the Kingdom of God which He is preparing for us, or the kingdom of Satan, the evil one, who wished to deceive mankind and separate them from God.

If we accept Christ Jesus, the Son of God, as the ruler of our soul here on Earth, then we will see His Kingdom when we die. We will go to live with Him forever. It was for this purpose that Christ came to redeem us. He paid the penalty of our sin with His own life in order that we might have eternal life.

There also exists another kingdom called hell—that of the evil spirit, Satan. Long ago, he deceived man and caused him to disobey and reject God. Because God is just and good, He cannot allow any sin or disobedience to enter into His Presence. Consequently, the penalty for sin is complete separation from God forever.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Therefore, since no one who has ever sinned can enter into God’s

Kingdom, man would have to live eternally with Satan instead, who hates man and who continually seeks to cause him grief and sorrow.

Yet, God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son to die, so that everyone who believes and accepts Him into his heart would not be separated from God, but would have life with Him forever. Although, man fell from God's companionship, Christ came to restore and redeem us.

For three years, Christ healed the crippled, the blind, the deaf, cleansed the lepers and most of all, cleansed the spirits of men from all sin and evil. Then, the religious leaders of the nation put Jesus to death on a cross because they were jealous of the great crowds who loved Jesus and followed Him.

They unwittingly carried out the great plan God had for restoring man's lost relationship with Himself. He allowed His Son to be punished by death for all mankind.

With His mission accomplished, He arose from the dead, appeared to all His closest disciples and to several hundred others who testified of seeing and talking with Him. Then, while He was speaking with some of His followers, He ascended into the Heavens and disappeared into the clouds. He went to His heavenly Kingdom to await you and all of mankind who accepts Christ, the Redeemer of man.

Any person who accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord will escape the kingdom of Satan and will receive glorious eternal life with God, which Christ purchased by being crucified on a cross.

The Holy Bible, written by devout men of God, tells the story of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and of His mission on Earth. We shall use Scripture texts from some of the 66 books of the Bible to help us in understanding the Divine nature of Christ.

PROOF 1 – JESUS DECLARED HE IS THE SON OF GOD

“... do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’” (John 10:36)

Through this Scripture, we find that Christ claimed He is the Son of God. There are some who say that Jesus was a good man, but they don’t believe He was Divine. However, if Jesus were lying when He said, “I am the Son of God,” He certainly wouldn’t qualify as a good man. He’d either be a liar or a man who was greatly deluded.

Notice something else Jesus claimed. He said that He lived before Abraham, who was the father of the Hebrew and Arab nations. “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). He was in Heaven with God before He came into the world. “*What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?” (John 6:62)

God had given His Son power to give men eternal life with God. Just before Christ was put on a cross to die, He was praying.

“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him’” (John 17:1, 2).

PROOF 2 – CHRIST’S RISE OUT OF OBSCURITY

There is nothing in all of history or in the processes of nature to account for this man, Jesus, Who emerged out of total obscurity. He is incomparably the most perfect figure of all time—One so immeasurably superior to all other humans that no comparison is even possible.

During the nearly thirty years Jesus was growing up in Nazareth, Israel, there was no striking evidence that an extraordinary person was living there. The remarks of the people who lived in that village and knew Him revealed their amazement at the power displayed in His ministry. We see this in the following scripture:

“And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works

are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him" (Mark 6:2, 3).

In other words, although His brothers and sisters had lived in the same house with Jesus a good part of thirty years, they seemingly had seen nothing unusually remarkable about Him. To them and their neighbors, He was probably above average, but that was all. Jesus occupied a position as a humble carpenter in the village which attracted little notice. His customers were acquaintances and peasants from neighboring areas. He earned a small wage, enough to supply the simple needs of the family, and nothing more.

Yet, in three years' time, the impact of His ministry made Him the hope of this life and the life to come for millions of people who have accepted Him into their lives. His Words were carefully collected and written down to be treasured as the Words of more than a man. Though hated by His enemies, He so captivated the hearts of the multitudes down through the centuries, that many have considered it a supreme honor to die for Him.

PROOF 3 – HE SPOKE WITH AUTHORITY AS “NO MAN SPOKE”

The first thing that impressed people about Christ was the authority with which He spoke. Although there was a remarkable tenderness in His voice, at the same time, there was a strange directness about His Words that pierced the very hearts and consciences of men. When people heard His famous sermon, which He preached on the mountain, they were not only struck by the majestic simplicity of His Words, but also with the authority with which He spoke. “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:28, 29). Following this sermon on the mountain, when Jesus came to Capernaum and spoke on the Sabbath day, the record says, “And they were amazed at His teaching, for His word was with authority...” (Luke 4:32 Amplified).

Soldiers, although hardened by their occupation, were affected as much as anyone else by His Presence. When the religious leaders and chief priests heard about the stir His ministry was making, they sent officers to take Him. The officers returned without Him saying, “No man

ever spoke like this man!” (John 7:46). When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus after Judas had betrayed Him with a kiss, He said to the officers, “I am He,” Then, “They went backward and fell to the ground” (John 18:6). When the army officer charged with oversight of the crucifixion witnessed the death of this noble figure hanging on the cross, he could only exclaim, “Truly this was the Son of God” (Matthew 27:54).

PROOF 4 – CHRIST KNEW THE INNERMOST THOUGHTS OF THE SINNER AND BESTOWED FORGIVENESS ON HIM

“But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man” (John 2:24, 25).

Sinners loved to be near Christ, not because they felt at ease in their sins, for indeed His Presence made them painfully aware of their sinfulness and failures. But somehow, in Him, they saw a cure for their weaknesses. They saw in Him their deliverance. The book of John speaks of a woman who met Christ while she was drawing water from a well. When she realized that there was something unusual about Christ, she began to ask Him more questions. He only had to say a few Words before the woman felt her soul had been exposed for all to see. Christ knew all about her, even though she had never seen Him before. He told her, “for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly” (John 4:18). Yet, the purity of Christ, in contrast to her own sinfulness, did not cause her to despair. So kind and compassionate was His voice that she felt hope and forgiveness in the very One Who had called attention to her sinful past. Her testimony to her neighbors carried such conviction that they also came and believed “that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (John 4:42).

Every evil deed and thought of man is open to the omnipotent God. As the Scripture says, “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account” (Hebrews 4:13). Someday, men must stand before Him and give an account of their deeds. “And they were judged, each one according to his works” (Revelation 20:13). However, if our sins are confessed, they will not be remembered against us anymore (1 John 1:9; Jeremiah 31:34). Christ paid the penalty for sin with His spilled blood on the cross. Today, He is our Savior; but in the final day, He will be our

Judge.

PROOF 5 – CHRIST WAS THE ONLY SINLESS MAN

Beyond the impact of His miracles, Christ impressed men with His being sinless. His enemies were jealous because of His ability to perform miracles and to cause people to love and follow Him, so they wished to accuse Him of some wrongdoing. Yet, all they could accuse Him of was doing good deeds on their day of rest—the Sabbath—or eating with sinners. Christ replied: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what *this* means: *‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’* For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Matthew 9:12, 13). Christ had come to help even the worst of men.

Christ lived a sinless life, which is an amazing thing, for ours is a fallen race. The best of us, without Christ’s redemptive power, find evil tendencies seeking to control or dominate us.

The great Saint Paul, whom God used to write much of the New Testament and who was one of the first to spread the Good News of Christ said,

“For I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am [ever] doing. Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it [it is not myself that acts], but the sin [principle] which dwells within me [fixed and operating in my soul]” (Romans 7:19-20 Amplified).

As a race, we have all disobeyed, and therefore, sinned. **So**, to find a man who is perfect and without sin is to find one whose root is not in the human race.

PROOF 6 – CHRIST PERFORMED MIRACLES NEVER BEFORE PERFORMED BY MAN

“Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing” (John 9:32, 33).

The man who was healed had been born blind. The enemies of Christ tried to belittle the miracle by saying that He was a sinner. The man responded with unanswerable logic saying, “Whether He is a sinner *or*

not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). Christ proved that He was unique by His power to perform miracles, even by giving sight to the blind.

A “miracle” is the universal language understood by all peoples. When genuine miracles take place, most people will believe. As Jesus said, “... though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him” (John 10:38).

Some years ago, a minister was standing before a great audience. The people of this audience had been taught that Jesus was only a man, and He was dead in the tomb. The evangelist stood before the crowd and said, “You have been told that Jesus Christ is dead, that He was only a man. But if Christ were to come in Spirit and heal the sick, would you believe He is alive?” The audience made it known it was a fair test.

The minister began to pray for the sick. One person after another was healed. The blind were able to see, and the lame walked. When people witnessed these things, they began to cry out, “Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive! He is healing our sick.”

So it is, the great miracles that are taking place today, through the power of Jesus’ Name, are all the proof anyone needs to be assured He is alive today—that He is the Son of God Who is seated at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven.

PROOF 7 – JESUS PREDICTED THE FALL OF THREE CITIES: CAPERNAUM, CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you” (Matthew 11:21-24).

At the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, He made the city of Capernaum, Israel, His home. Capernaum, along with Bethsaida and Chorazin, enjoyed privileges that few other cities ever had. The Son of God from Heaven dwelt in their midst. For a season, the people heard

His Words, saw His miracles, and rejoiced (Luke 8:40). However, these cities, situated in the northern Galilee, were at the crossroads of the great trade routes of the world. Many of the inhabitants were absorbed in sharing in the booming prosperity, and their attention was diverted to accumulating material wealth. As a result, there was no deep work of repentance that took place in their lives. This was the case, despite the fact they had witnessed the kind of miracles that would have converted Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities which were destroyed because of their evil. Jesus, with sorrow, warned them of their impending fate. Still, they did not listen.

What happened to Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin? At the time of the Jewish rebellion in AD 65, Titus, the emperor, brought in the Fifth and Tenth Legions of the Roman army. The Romans began a systematic devastation of the country. One by one, the cities of Galilee fell, including those cities Jesus had denounced—Capernaum Bethsaida and Chorazin. Many of the inhabitants were killed in battle, and those who survived were sold into slavery. No doubt, if some of the people who lived in the days when Christ preached on the shores of Galilee were still alive and could remember His words, they could recall His miracles and His invitation to repentance. They would also recall His Words of warning to all those who would not repent. Capernaum's prosperity and pride of life, which had been her downfall, were swept away forever. Ironically, an earthquake later shook the area and leveled all that was left standing.

Today, only one city, Tiberias, still stands on the Sea of Galilee, and it is not one of the three mentioned above. For many centuries, Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin have been no more. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:33). His Words were fulfilled to the exact letter.

PROOF 8 – JESUS PREDICTED THE FALL OF JERUSALEM TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN ONE GENERATION

Jesus stood on the Mt. of Olives overlooking the city of Jerusalem, Israel. The people had rejected Him as their Lord. He knew what it meant, and He wept over Jerusalem because they did not know the time of their visitation (Luke 19:41-44):

“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your

day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

Jesus foresaw that the generation before this one would pass away (Luke 21:32); that an enemy would come and throw up fortifications against the city and destroy it.

What happened? The Jews, unmindful of the warning, carried on a steady persecution of the followers of Christ, killing many and imprisoning others. Then, in the year AD 65 the fateful drama began to unfold. Becoming bolder, the more radical elements attempted to throw off the yoke of their Roman masters. The spirit of rebellion flared throughout the country. The Jews had some preliminary successes and were encouraged to believe they could win against the might of Rome.

Then, the seasoned legions of Titus appeared and broke through the walls of Jerusalem, destroying the city after a long siege. This event took place exactly forty years after Christ had made the prediction of its destruction. It was, in fact, just one generation later.

PROOF 9 – CHRIST FORETOLD THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS

After foretelling the siege of Jerusalem and the great catastrophe that was to overtake the city, Jesus warned what would happen to the Jews because they had rejected Christ. His followers were now to go to the whole world to acquaint all people with Christ. (Later, Christ would come back to the Jews after the other peoples, or Gentiles, had had an opportunity to accept Him.)

“And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

That is exactly what happened. The Jews, by their rejection of their Lord, had forfeited the Divine protection God intended them to have. After the fall of Jerusalem, the survivors were herded together like animals and marched to the slave markets. The marts became so glutted

that their captors had to sell them at unbelievably low prices. Many died on the way because of the inhuman treatment they received.

From the slave markets, the Jews were dispersed throughout the nations of the world. This all took place in what is called the Gentile Age. Jerusalem was demolished by the Gentiles, or non-Jewish people. At long last, the Jew has returned to his homeland and is startling proof that it is close to the time for Christ to return to Earth again. The Holy Scriptures tell us that one of the signs of Christ's soon coming would be when the Jewish people would return to their country.

“Thus says the Lord God: In the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities I will [also] cause [Israel's] cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the desolate land shall be tilled, that which had lain desolate in the sight of all who passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited” (Ezekiel 36:33-35 Amplified).

PROOF 10 – CHRIST GAVE HIS OWN LIFE TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM

The pages of history are marked by illustrious men whose genius was dedicated to the building of great empires. Alexander the Great and his armies moved across the world in a conquering fury. In a series of battles, in which he demonstrated his remarkable generalship, he created an empire from Macedonia to the Indus River. It is said that, just before his death, Alexander wept because there were no more worlds to conquer.

Caesar conquered Gaul and became the father of the Roman Empire, and in a series of lightning maneuvers, subdued all of Europe to the Rhine River. Crossing the Rubicon against orders, he entered Rome and became its master.

All these sought to build their empires by shedding the blood of others. Christ, too, came to establish a Kingdom—one that is universal and eternal—not with the blood of others, but by giving His own life. Christ's Kingdom is not of this present age, except as it is in the hearts of His people. Before He was crucified, Jesus Christ told Pilate the Governor, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here” (John 18:36). When His disciple, Peter, sought to prevent the officers from arresting Him, Jesus

said, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52).

Christ is unique in that He inaugurated His own Kingdom, not by shedding the blood of others, but by giving His own blood.

PROOF 11 – THE BIBLE PREDICTED ALL THE MAIN EVENTS THAT ACCOMPANIED CHRIST’S TRIAL, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

The Old Testament was written by God through prophets who lived 500 to 1500 years before Christ was born. They prophesied of His coming to Earth and of the many events in His life, even though Christ was not to be born for many more centuries.

The New Testament, which is also inspired of God and written by devout followers of Christ, points, again and again, to how His life fulfilled these prophecies.

Compare these Old Testament prophecies with the New Testament recordings of their fulfillment.

1. The Messiah was to be rejected (Isaiah 53:3, John 1:11).
2. He was to be betrayed by one of His close followers and friends (Psalm 41:9; Mark 14:10).
3. He was to be sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15).
4. He was to be silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 26:62, 63).
5. He was to be smitten and spat upon (Isaiah 50:6; Mark 14:65).
6. He was to bring healing to the people (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:14-17).
7. He was to be mocked and taunted (Psalm 22:6-8; Matthew 27:39, 40).
8. He was to suffer with transgressors and pray for His enemies (Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38; Luke 23:34).
9. His hands and feet were to be pierced (Psalm 22:16; John 20:27).
10. He was to be given gall and vinegar (Psalm 69:21; John 19:29).
11. His side was to be pierced (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34).
12. They were to cast lots for His garments (Psalm 22:18; Mark 15:24).
13. He was to be buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60).
14. He was to be a sacrifice for sin (Isaiah 53:5, 8, 10, 12; John 1:29).

15. He was to be raised from the dead (Psalm 16:10; Matthew 28:9).
16. He was to ascend to the right hand of God (Psalm 68:18; Luke 24:50, 51).
17. He was to come again (Daniel 7:13, 14; Matthew 24:30).

Who can look at all these documented, detailed prophecies and their amazing fulfillments and not be compelled to say as the centurion of old, “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54).

PROOF 12 – HE PROVED HE WAS THE CHRIST BY HIS POWER OVER DEATH

Many great men have lived and made their mark on the world; but they all died, and their bones still lie in their graves. Go to the Invalides of Paris, and you may gaze at the sealed tomb of Napoleon. His body is still there. In Westminster Abbey in London, one can see the mausoleum that holds the bodies of many of Britain’s greatest statesmen and kings. Their bones are all there, moldering in the dust. At Mount Vernon is the last resting place of George Washington, who was called the “Father of the United States.” His body still lies in the tomb. One by one, the world’s great, as well as its insignificant, have been laid away in their resting places. Only in one place in the world is there an empty tomb. This tomb is in Jerusalem at the foot of Calvary where they once laid the Lord Jesus. It was at the tomb, three days later, that the angel appeared to some of His followers who had come to the tomb to weep. The angel said, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!” (Luke 24:5, 6).

Jesus said that one sign should be given to that generation: “No sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah” (Matthew 16:4). “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40).

It was this sign that birthed faith and inspiration in the Early Church. For all time, Jesus had overcome the age-old problem of death. It was upon this incontestable victory over death that the apostles with great power gave “... witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

PROOF 13 – CHRIST HAD A NEW BODY

“And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and

Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing'" (John 20:26, 27).

Christ was the first man Who lived on Earth and received a resurrected body. The risen Christ was more than a spirit; He had a real body. In appearance, it was much the same body He had previously had, although now, it bore the marks of the nails and the spear. His voice was recognizable. When Jesus said, "Mary," to one of His followers, she knew the One speaking was her Lord. Except when Jesus wished to conceal His identity, He was instantly recognizable as the "same Jesus." He could eat food as He did when in His physical body. He could walk at the same natural pace as others. Yet, when He desired, He could travel instantaneously to distant places or go through locked doors.

At the resurrection, Christ's body underwent a fundamental change—a glorification. It was now able to accommodate itself in two separate worlds. In other words, the Lord could adapt Himself to physical laws, but He was not bound by them.

The revelation we have of Christ's resurrection is also relevant to the Christian. One day, when Christ returns to Earth, we shall receive a body like His, for it is written, "We shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). It will be a distinctively different body from the one we have now because our mortal bodies will have become immortal. These bodies will not be subject to disease, aging or physical limitations, and like Christ, we shall never die.

PROOF 14 – THE VERY CITY WHERE CHRIST WAS TO BE BORN WAS NAMED 500 YEARS EARLIER

The only person in the world, to have the city of His birth identified centuries before His birth took place, was Jesus Christ. Micah, the Jewish Prophet, writing 500 years before Christ's birth, tells of One "Whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). This is clearly a reference to Christ Who, as the Son of God, existed prior to His earthly birth. He was the God-man Who was to be born in the little town of Bethlehem, Israel.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little

among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

Only a few weeks before His birth, Jesus’ mother, Mary, great with child, was in the city of Nazareth. She had no plans to travel many miles south to Bethlehem.

However, the Roman Emperor Augustus made a decree that all the world should be taxed. To obey the law, Mary was forced to make the long trip south with her husband, Joseph, in order to register in the city of their lineage. At that time, she was in the advanced stages of her pregnancy. Reaching Bethlehem after a tiring journey, Mary realized she was about to give birth to her firstborn. Her husband, Joseph, looked desperately for some kind of shelter. To his dismay, every room in the inn had been taken, and no other lodging was available. He finally found a manger among the animals, to serve their purpose. In these crude surroundings, the greatest event of history occurred—the birth of the Christ-child. The inhabitants of Bethlehem, except some humble shepherds to whom angels appeared (Luke 2:8), were quite unaware of the stupendous event that had just taken place in their little city. Yes, the child, Jesus, was born in the city of Bethlehem where the prophet Micah, five centuries earlier, said He would be born.

PROOF 15 – THE PROPHET ISAIAH PREDICTED CHRIST’S WAS TO BE BORN OF A VIRGIN 800 YEARS BEFORE HIS BIRTH

Eight centuries before Jesus was born, the Prophet Isaiah predicted that a virgin would be with child, and His Name would be called Immanuel.

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

This is exactly what took place. The angel Gabriel appeared to the virgin, Mary, and told her she would be with child by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26, 38). When Mary told her soon-to-be husband, Joseph, what had happened, he thought we would just divorce her after the ceremony. However, the angel appeared in a dream to him saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is

conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20).

Christ was the only person in the world Who was born of the Holy Spirit, rather than the will of man. Indeed, the fact is, if Christ were the Son of God, He had to be born of the Holy Spirit. He could not have partaken of man’s fallen state and still be our Savior. Christ was truly more than a man; He was the only begotten of the Father, God (John 3:16). We will speak further on this important subject of the virgin birth in another chapter.

PROOF 16 – THE TIME OF CHRIST’S BIRTH WAS PROPHESED NEARLY 500 YEARS BEFORE HE WAS BORN

The most amazing fact about Christ’s birth was the prophecy predicted the very time He was to be born! From “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” there should be 69 weeks of years.

“Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem until [the coming of] the Anointed One, a Prince, shall be seven weeks [of years] and sixty-two weeks [of years]; it shall be built again with [city] square and moat, but in troublous times. And after the sixty-two weeks [of years] shall the Anointed One be cut off or killed and shall have nothing [and no one] belonging to [and defending] Him. And the people of the [other] prince who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood; and even to the end there shall be war, and desolations are decreed” (Daniel 9:25, 26 Amplified).

Five centuries before Christ was born, the Prophet Daniel prophesied the future under the inspiration of God.

He said that Jerusalem, which lay in ruins, would be rebuilt. Another prophet, Isaiah, foretold who would give the command to rebuild Jerusalem—King Cyrus.

“Who says of Cyrus, He is My shepherd (ruler), and he shall perform all My pleasure and fulfill all My purpose—even saying of Jerusalem, She shall [again] be built, and of the temple, Your foundation shall [again] be laid” (Isaiah 44:28 Amplified).

History records it was during the reign of Cyrus that the command for the restoration of the city of Jerusalem was given. The question is, when was this command actually given?

The commonly accepted chronologies, which differ slightly among themselves, show the event to be just before the 5th century BC. Bible chronology sets the time in the 5th century. One thing is for certain, the decree to rebuild Jerusalem took place either just before or just after, the beginning of the 5th century BC.

This being true, then, according to the Prophet Daniel, “69 weeks” of years later after the command to restore Jerusalem was given, the Messiah was to come. The question then is, “Did the Messiah appear to Israel at this time?”

Before we answer this question, we must define what is meant by “69 weeks.” Plainly, they could not be weeks of 24 hour days, since 69 weeks of days is 483 days or only a little over a year. In Bible times, a period of seven years instead of seven days is often spoken of as a “week” of years. This is shown in the book of Genesis, where Laban bargained with Jacob to work another “week” or “seven other years” for his younger daughter, Rachel.

“Finish the week; then we will give you [Rachel] also,
and you shall work for me yet seven more years in return”
(Genesis 29:27 Amplified).

A “week” of years being seven years, then 69 weeks would be 483 years. So, according to the Prophet Daniel, 483 years after the commandment went forth to rebuild Jerusalem, the Messiah would appear. Now, when did the 483 years run out? Did the Messiah, the Son of God, appear about five centuries later? The only Messiah the world knows anything about did appear at about that time—and that was Jesus Christ! Although the secular calendar may be a little uncertain so the date is not exactly determined, nevertheless, it definitely indicates the years ran out at the era of Christ!

Could we want a more irrefutable proof that Jesus is the Messiah? Could a fraud possibly have been perpetrated? How could it? Daniel’s prophecy was given many centuries earlier. Either the Messiah had to appear at that time or else Daniel’s prophecy was false. The fact is, Jesus came at that time, and His life had such an impact upon the world that the peoples of many nations have accepted Him as the Christ!

PROOF 17 – CHRIST’S DEATH AS THE MESSIAH WAS PREDICTED 900 YEARS BEFORE HIS BIRTH

There is another very remarkable thing about the prophecy of Daniel 9:24. The children of Israel supposed that when the Lord (Whom they called the Messiah) came, He would set up His Kingdom on Earth. Even the apostles of Christ assumed that He would at once sit on His throne (Acts 1:6, 7). However, the prophecy says instead that the Messiah was to be “cut off, or killed” (Daniel 9:26). Rather than setting up a visible kingdom at His first coming, prophecy declared that He was going to die! There is only one person in history who could possibly have fulfilled this prophecy at that time, and He was Jesus Christ.

Even the kind of death the Messiah was to die was foretold. His hands and feet were to be pierced—that is by crucifixion. Nine hundred years before it happened, the Psalmist David said,

“For (like a pack of) dogs they have encompassed me; a company of evildoers has encircled me; they pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:16 Amplified).

So, many centuries in advance, both the manner of His birth and the manner of His death were predicted. Only the One Who created this world could make these prophecies come to pass in this fashion.

PROOF 18 – CHRIST GIVES A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TODAY

Beyond all else, the religion of Christ satisfies because the believer possesses Christ Himself. He promised He would come into our lives and change them, and we would become new creatures. He promised to take away our burden of sin and bring peace into our hearts. Some may argue against Christianity, but they cannot argue against the experience one has through Christ. Christ is able to do what no other religion can—live and dwell within the human heart, and it has been this way through the ages. Millions have accepted Christ and found Him to be their all in all.

Again and again, the Apostle Paul referred to his own experience when he met Christ on the Damascus Road (Acts 9). It was the high point of his preaching. He told and retold the story wherever he went. The Christian’s personal experience with Christ is the greatest proof of His reality.

It is as the poet wrote:

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today.
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
Salvation to impart.
You ask me how I know He lives.
He lives within my heart.

CHAPTER 2

The Miracle of the Virgin Birth

In the first chapter, we considered 18 proofs that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The central pillar of His peculiar origin and destiny is His virgin birth—a circumstance which is uniquely different from the birth of any other human being. Through the supernatural conception of the Holy Spirit, Christ received His earthly body through His mother, Mary. His God-identity came from His Father, God. Had He been of the first man Adam's seed, He would have been a fallen human being as are all human beings. This would have meant He would not have been capable of redeeming humanity. The whole foundation of Christianity must rest upon this fact—the virgin birth. The first foretelling of Christ's birth was written 1500 years before by Moses who referred to Christ as “the seed” of the woman, rather than the seed of Adam, or man (Genesis 3:15).

This is an important, fundamental and basic truth of the Gospel. Below are seven great proofs of the virgin birth of Christ.

1. Christ's name in prophecy was called Immanuel, “God with us.” The words of Isaiah directly declared this Immanuel should be born of a virgin:

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and
shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

2. Matthew 1:23 declares the birth of Jesus of the virgin, Mary, was a fulfillment of prophecy.
3. Before they were married, Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary, discovered that she was with child. While pondering what he should do about it, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, informing him that which had been conceived in Mary was not of man, but of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-20).
4. Luke 1:26-38 tells of the angel's visit to Mary. During this visit, the angel told Mary she would be with child by the Holy Spirit, and this child would be called the Son of God.

“Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God*’” (Luke 1:34, 35).

5. It was prophesied the Messiah would come from the line of David, who was the greatest king to have ever ruled the Hebrew nation, after the flesh (2 Samuel 7:12-19; Psalm 89:3, 4, 34-37; 132:11; Acts 2:30; 13:22, 23). These prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus as the son of Mary, who came from the line of David. Joseph, Mary’s husband, also of the royal line, was the legal father of Jesus, but he was not His natural father. Jesus could not come from the seed of sinful man because of Adam’s disobedience, but there is also another reason He could not come through His earthly father’s—Joseph’s—lineage. Joseph was a descendant of Jeconiah, a particularly wicked king. Because of the extreme fragrance of his evil reign, God said that none of the seed of Jeconiah (also called Coniah) would sit upon the throne of David forever.

“O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord: Write this man [Coniah] down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his offspring shall succeed in sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah” (Jeremiah 22:29, 30 Amplified).

Therefore, if Jesus had actually been the son of Joseph, He would not have been eligible for the throne of David. Christ was from the lineage of David through the maternal line, His mother, Mary. Through His mother, Jesus became eligible for the throne of David. Through these events, we can see the amazing preciseness and fulfillment of Scriptures. This fact, alone, should cause someone to rethink their position if they ever doubted the virgin birth of Christ.

6. Jesus’ own Words proved that He was not the son of David on His paternal side. He asked the Pharisees, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They answered, “*The Son of David*”(Matthew 22:42). The Pharisees were thinking of Him

as a direct seed of David through a human father. Then, Jesus asked them another question.

“He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him *‘Lord’* saying: *‘The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?’* If David then calls Him *‘Lord,’* how is He his Son?’” (Matthew 22:43, 45).

After this, the Pharisees had no answer. It seemed highly unlikely, as well as inappropriate for David, in the Spirit, to call a fleshly descendant of his, his Lord.

From these Words, it is also evident Jesus knew of His own virgin birth and knew He was not the son of Joseph.

7. Finally, the Early Church fathers believed in the virgin birth. The belief is found in the Apostles’ Creed, which was written in the early part of the second century.

Great historians, such as Ignatius, believed in the virgin birth and defended it against the heresies of his time. Origen, in his treatise against Celsus and Tertullian, also believed and defended the virgin birth.

We don’t need to lengthen the list of names, since the Early Church fathers consistently put themselves on record as believing in the virgin birth. They vigorously defended it against all heresies.

The virgin birth is the reason Christ is uniquely different from all other men. He was human through His earthly birth; but He was also God because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

THE BOY JESUS

Although Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a righteous man according to the Scriptures, he was probably considered a peasant by the upper classes. He worked in his carpenter shop as an honest, laboring man, supporting his large family to the best of his ability. As Jesus and His brothers grew, they joined Joseph in the shop, contributing to the support of the family.

At the age of eight, Jesus was sent to the synagogue where He was taught to read and write from the rolls of Scriptures. It appears, from Luke 4:16, the reading ability of Jesus was considered superior enough

for Him to be given the regular task of reading from the sacred scrolls each Sabbath.

As a youth, Jesus made no deep impression upon the community. At a later date when His ministry made its first impact upon the nation, the local inhabitants of Nazareth spoke to each other in amazement saying, “Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!” (Mark 6:2) It also appears from John 7:3-5, His own brethren were not convinced of His Divine mission. Later on, however, they did believe (Acts 1:14).

These silent years were by no means idle years. During the day, Jesus was busy in the carpenter shop. In the evening, His mother would find Him studying the Holy Scriptures. Naturally, His thoughts were occupied by some of the inspired writings of the Old Testament which related to His future work.

The years, one by one, slipped away as Jesus came to full manhood. Then, the day came when Jesus laid down His tools and left the carpenter shop forever. For Him, it was the hour of decision. Bidding goodbye to His family, He went His way to the Jordan River where an itinerant evangelist, oddly dressed in a girdle of camel’s hair, was preaching a message of repentance. It was John the Baptist. Against John’s protest, he baptized Jesus in the water of the Jordan River. Then, Jesus disappeared for forty days, fasting and meditating in the solitude of the wilderness.

Afterwards, He began a ministry which, in three short years, would rock the nation from the inner core, spreading eventually to the whole world.

Jesus did not begin His ministry in His hometown, Nazareth. As He said, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country ...” (Mark 6:4). Also, the village of Nazareth was hidden away, off the main road. The Lord needed a center from which His ministry could radiate into all parts of the nation. So, He chose the flourishing city of Capernaum as His headquarters, located on the Sea of Galilee.

There, among the teeming population of the cities that lay along the Galilean shore, Christianity was cradled. Jesus began the proclamation of the Good News of the Gospel. At times, He preached while standing on a small ship a distance from the shore. On other occasions, He ministered on the neighboring hills that overlooked the sea. In Galilee, the multitudes came to hear Him teach and be healed of their diseases. The good news of His work soon spread far and wide. Within a few short months, it was a ministry with thousands of followers.

CHAPTER 3

The Mission of Christ

After Christ appeared, it became possible to compare the actual events of His life with the passages in the ancient writings; thus confirming our faith that the One Who came was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God.

There was another purpose accomplished by Christ being born at that particular time. The world, by this time, had been given an opportunity to develop and boasted many notable achievements. It was now fact ... man could rise to higher levels in the arts and refinements of life, literature, painting and in architecture. The only area in which man had not been able to raise himself up was in the religious realm. While man had made great progress in other fields of knowledge—improving his intellect, refining his tastes and correcting his manners—he could not purify his heart. The sad story of the moral decline of mankind is drawn by the inspired writer in Romans 1:21-23.

“Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”

Man must have a Savior; he is not complete in himself. Contrary to the speculations of blind philosophers who contend there is an upward urge in nature, the sad fact is, apart from Christ, the inherent tendency in the moral life of mankind is a downward move.

Although Christ performed many marvelous miracles, it was not His purpose to merely heal the afflicted and infirmed, who might become sick again, or to raise the dead, knowing a time would come when they would die again. Nor did He come to satisfy the physical appetite of men, only to have them hunger again. He came into the world to give men the bread of life—bread for the soul, so that they might never hunger nor thirst spiritually again. He came to preach a Gospel of repentance to save men from their sins, so they would never perish. When people told Him of Governor Pilate, who had slain certain persons, or of the tower of Siloam, which had fallen on eighteen others, causing their death, He said,

“Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:2, 3).

Not all accepted Christ’s call to repentance. There, in northern Galilee, where the great trade routes crossed, was a strong temptation for men to become deeply engaged in the pursuit of riches and material things. Although the inhabitants seemed deeply impressed with Christ’s miracles and His teachings, for most of them, the urge to get their part of the prosperity outweighed Christ’s call to “forsake all and follow me.”

Some, who were drawn by Christ’s appeal, followed Him for a time, but they had not fully counted the cost. A rich young ruler came to Him and asked, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16). With love for the earnest young man, Jesus told him to leave his riches and follow Him. Christ said this because He knew the young man loved his money more than God. Sadly, the youth turned away; the price was too great for him to pay. He wanted to give God second place in his life.

“Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (Mark 10:21, 22).

Whether men accept Him or reject Him, Christ is the stone, the chief cornerstone by which the destinies of men are forever settled. He spoke to the religious leaders saying, “And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder” (Matthew 21:44). In other words, he who accepts Christ will be broken, but not destroyed. This breaking is only to make one stronger, so his life might be reshaped and made new. The one who rejects Christ, on the other hand, will be ground to powder without any recourse for change.

The teachings of Christ are beautifully illustrated in His conversations with people who came to Him with their questions. He always went straight to the heart of the person’s need or problem.

Under deep conviction, Peter said to Him, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” (Luke 5:8) Jesus replied, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” Why did Jesus give Peter this answer,

instead of reproaching him for his sinful past? Jesus gave him this answer because Peter was already convicted of his sins; he knew, without Christ, he was a lost man. Actually, the last thing he desired was for the Lord to depart from him. What Peter really wanted was to follow Jesus. The Lord told him he would still be a fisherman, but from then on, he would be fishing for men.

Nicodemus, a religious leader, came to Christ at night to talk about the miracles and Christ's standing as a prophet. The Lord ignored this and turned the conversation around to the spiritual need of Nicodemus by saying, "... unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nicodemus looked deeply surprised at this statement, and his patronizing manner abruptly changed. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" asked Nicodemus. Christ continued to hold the initiative in the conversation. He drove home the point by saying that although Nicodemus was a ruler in a high religious court called the Sanhedrin, this could not give him entrance into the Kingdom of God. No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of the Spirit. This rebirth takes place when a person accepts Christ into his heart and life as Savior and Lord. "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" (John 3:7), Jesus said. Everyone must have a radical change in his or her nature. The startled Nicodemus was altogether overwhelmed by these words which seemed to him so revolutionary. Three years later, however, Nicodemus dared to risk his position in the Sanhedrin court when he and Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and claimed the body of Christ for burial (John 19:38-40).

Another time, they brought a woman to Jesus who had been caught in adultery. As she cringed before her accusers, they craftily asked Jesus whether or not she should be stoned according to the Law of Moses. The Lord looked upon her with pity and compassion. He bent down and wrote in the sand. Finally, He stood and turned to the self-righteous, religious leaders who were using the miserable woman as a means to entrap Him "... and said to them, 'He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.' And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground" (John 8:7, 8).

What was Jesus writing on the ground? It has been thought Jesus was writing the sins of each of the Pharisees (religious leaders), beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. Overtaken with conviction, the woman's accusers had nothing further to say and shamefacedly made a hurried departure. Jesus asked the woman where her accusers were. When she looked up and saw they had all left, Jesus said to her, "Neither

do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Once, a man asked Jesus to “... tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus gave a sharp rebuke saying, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you ... Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15). He then described the fate of a rich fool who thought to tear down his barns and build greater ones, so he might have more room to store his goods. The rich man said to his soul, “‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’” (Luke 12:19, 20).

When Jesus heard that His close friend, Lazarus, was dead, and He saw the people mourning and weeping, He himself wept (John 11:35). Obviously, Jesus was not weeping for those who, in a brief moment, would witness His power over death as He raised Lazarus from the dead. Rather, He wept for the sorrows of a whole forlorn world that was suffering from the consequences of sin that had cursed the race.

Again, on the way to the cross, Jesus saw the women weeping because of Him, and He said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children” (Luke 23:28). He was always thinking of others rather than Himself.

On the cross, the soldiers, sadly ignorant of whom they had crucified, cast lots for His robe. Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

On either side of Him, two thieves were also crucified. At first, both of the criminals reviled Him (Matthew 27:4). One of them said, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us” (Luke 23:39). The other one, soon convinced that Jesus was the Son of God, rebuked his companion and sought the Lord for mercy. Jesus, forgetting His own suffering, spoke words of peace to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:40-43).

The fateful afternoon waned; darkness descended upon the Earth. Death had overtaken the Prince of Life. Men took His body down from the cross and wrapped it in a linen garment in preparation for His burial and the tomb. After the guards warned Pilate, the governor, that this man had claimed He would rise from the dead, they convinced Pilate to station soldiers around the tomb to make sure there was no molestation or theft of the body.

For three days and nights they guarded the tomb. Early, on the morning of the third day, something happened! It not only shook the

Earth, but it shook the entire spirit world, as well. The powers of Satan were broken; death loosed its grip; and Christ arose from the grave!

When grief-stricken followers of Jesus came to the tomb to perform what they thought was the last service for the dead, two men in bright shining clothes were in the tomb. Full of fear, the women bowed down to the ground. The men spoke, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee,” saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” (Luke 24:5-7).

Christ was indeed raised from the dead, and now, He is alive forevermore!

The risen Savior then appeared to the disciples and gave them the Great Commission. He told them to preach the Gospel to all the world.

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” (Mark 16:15-20).

CHAPTER 4

Why We Must Accept Christ

There is only one true God. The Creator of the universe existed before the beginning of the world. God is a good God, a God of love. He created man to be a companion and friend to Him.

Since Satan deceived man and caused him to rebel and sin against God, sinful man is separated from God. This is a most terrible consequence.

God is holy and perfect; therefore, He cannot associate with anyone who has sin in his life. So, our sins cause us to be eternally separated from God. In order to bring mankind back into communion or fellowship with Himself, He allowed His only Son, Christ, to pay the penalty of death for our sins. If we accept His Son, God will forgive our sins, and it will be as if we had never sinned. Once we allow ourselves to be redeemed back to God, we can then commune with Him, even while we still live on this Earth. When our life on Earth is finished, we will go to live with Him forever.

WHAT DOES CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS MEAN TO YOU PERSONALLY?

Let us think back to the day when Christ was crucified. There He hung between Earth and Heaven—a spectacle to men and angels with the tortures becoming more unendurable every moment. Death by crucifixion includes the sum total of all the suffering a body can experience: thirst, fever, open shame, long, continual torment.

It was now the noon hour. This is ordinarily the brightest hour of the day, but, on this day, darkness began to descend upon the Earth. Nature itself, unable to bear the scene, withdrew its light, and the Heavens became black. This darkness had an immediate effect upon the onlookers. There were no more jeers and taunts. People began to slip away silently, leaving Jesus alone to drink the deepest depths of suffering and humiliation. Yet, a great horror was still ahead. Instead of a joyful communion with God, there was a cry of distress. Jesus found himself utterly deserted by both man and God. His cry, even today, brings a shudder of terror. It was ... *“My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”*

Apparently, there was one thing God had withheld from His Son,

Christ. God's was concerned Jesus would be unable to bear it. The terrible truth came to Him only in the last hours of darkness. As the sun withdrew its light, the Presence of God was also being withdrawn. Though sometimes forsaken of men, He could always turn in confidence to His heavenly Father. Now, this was not possible, for even God had forsaken Him.

God, indeed, had forsaken Him, though it was only for a moment, and the reason is clear. At that moment, the sin of the world with all its hideousness rested upon Jesus. He became sin, "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ was made sin for us. He took upon Himself the sin of the world, including yours and mine. Therefore, He had to receive the judgment that fell upon sin: separation from God.

Now, at last, the end was drawing near. The loss of blood produces a thirst that is beyond description. Jesus cried, "I thirst!" The One Who hung on the cross thirsted. He is the same One Who now satisfies our souls' thirst—"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37).

The final moment had come. Jesus bowed His head, saying as He died, "It is finished!" Salvation had been completed. It is a forever-finished work for all of eternity. It cannot be achieved by man's works or earned by fasting, penances or pilgrimages. We do not need to complete the work by our own efforts. There is nothing more to do, but accept it. There is no need to struggle or labor. All we need to do is just receive what God has prepared ... an infinite sacrifice.

Christ died for our salvation. He was raised again, three days and nights later in glorious triumph to never die. Therefore, He says, "BECAUSE I LIVE, YOU WILL LIVE ALSO" (John 14:19).

God has done all that is possible to bring you eternal life. He paid the full price of punishment for your sins. It is now your turn to accept Him. God sees your mind and heart. He knows all of your thoughts, and He loves you. If you sincerely want to accept Jesus Christ, the Son of God, into your life, you will be reborn. You will become a child of God, and God the Father will become your father. Are you ready to accept Him now?

NECESSARY STEPS TO SALVATION

1. *ACKNOWLEDGE*: "... for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke 18:13). You must acknowledge in the light of God's Word that you are a sinner.
2. *REPENT*: "... but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." (Acts 3:19). You must see the awfulness of sin and then repent of it.
3. *CONFESS*: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "... with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). Confess your sins to God.
4. *FORSAKE*: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD ... for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). Sorrow for sin is not enough in itself. We must want to be done with it once and for all.
5. *BELIEVE*: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "... that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross.
6. *RECEIVE*: "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:11, 12). Christ must be received personally into the heart by faith, if the experience of the New Birth is to be yours. (FGBMFI)

If you wish to accept Jesus Christ into your heart, it will help you to pray this prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,
I thank You that You love me.
I ask Your Son, Jesus Christ, to come
into my life.
I know I have sinned and committed
deeds displeasing to You.
I ask You now to forgive me of these
sins and to cleanse my life.
Help me to follow You and Your
teachings.
Protect me from Satan and evil.
Teach me to put You first in all my
thoughts and actions.

Help me to love my fellow man as you have
loved me.
And, Father, show me step by step the
plan You made for my life.
I give You myself and my life.
I worship and praise You, my Creator
and Lord.
I will continually thank You for
sacrificing Your Son on the cross that
I might have eternal life with You.
Help me to win others to Christ.
I await the return of Christ to take me
to Heaven.
Come soon, Lord Jesus. Amen.

