



(Jesus Christ) “. . . *declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,*” Romans 1:4.

The Son

Lesson Aim: The study of Articles 6, 8, 7.

6. The virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ. 8. His bodily resurrection and ascension back to His Father. 7. Christ's blood atonement for fallen man.

L498. Date: January 1960. **Text:** Romans 1:1-7; Hebrews 9:11-15.

Topic: Christ: Nature of; Doctrine: Studies In.

INTRODUCTION — Today, our study concerns the person of Jesus Christ. There is such a close kinship between Christ and Christianity that those who reject the Biblical truth concerning Christ have given up the right to be called Christians. To take away the name and person of Jesus Christ from Christianity is to have nothing left. The whole substance and strength of the Christian faith centers in Him. From beginning to end, in all its aspects and elements, the Christian faith is determined by the person and work of Jesus Christ. James Denney has written, “It owes its life and character at every point to Him. Its convictions are convictions about Him. Its hopes are hopes which He has inspired and which it is for Him to fulfill. Its ideals are born of His teaching and His life. Its strength is the strength of His spirit.” Therefore, today's lesson is an important phase in our doctrinal study.

Since Jesus Christ is the center of Christianity, we are truly Christian only as we are related to Him. The Scripture witnesses that salvation comes only through Him, Acts 4:12. It is only in Him that we have access to the Father, John 14:6. Effective prayer must be addressed to the Father in the name (authority) of Jesus, John 14:13; 15:16. We are made new creatures (spiritually) only as we are “in Christ,” II Corinthians 5:17. Our redemption from sin is based upon His sacrifice of Himself, Ephesians 1:7. It is no wonder that those who are His disciples are called “Christians” (meaning,

“Christ-like”). It behooves every believer so to seek perfection that his life will be increasingly like his Lord. Only thus is he truly “Christian.”

EXPOSITION

I. The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.

The student may profitably read the account of the virgin birth of Jesus in Mathew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-7. While there has been much recent debate about the correct translation of “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14, the New Testament removes all doubt. It clearly teaches the virgin birth of Jesus Christ as will be seen below.

Matthew and Luke record that Jesus was born of a human mother (Mary) without a human father. This Virgin Birth (that is, birth to a woman who is a virgin) is essential to a belief in the sinlessness of Jesus. Luke 1:35 indicates that there is a relation between the holiness of Jesus and the fact that Mary was overshadowed by the power of the Most High. Jesus identified Himself with the sinful race by being born of a woman and thus becoming human, Philippians 3:5-8. However, to redeem man by the sacrifice of Himself, He must be without sin. We studied last Sunday that human beings become sinners through heredity—inheriting a fallen nature. Jesus was the first (and only) person born in such a supernatural way as to partake of human nature and still live above sin.

Even the human nature of Christ was supernaturally conceived, Luke 1:34-35. The creation of the new humanity in Christ (by virgin birth) is as possible under God's power as much as the first creation of Adam. It is only thus that He could escape the fatal effects of sin. Thus Jesus was free from hereditary depravity and from actual sin. (Observe that Jesus never offered sacrifice, prayed for forgiveness, nor needed to experience the New Birth. He was naturally righteous.) From birth He was uniquely “the Son of God,” Luke 1:35.

As the virgin-born Son of God, Jesus represented both God and man. He could thereby effect the perfect redemptive sacrifice of Calvary. He was thereby the fulfillment of prophecy, Isaiah 7:14. He was free from the stain of sin as other men are effected. (Though subject to temptation, He was free from guilt.) He is fully qualified to be the Saviour of the world.

II. The Deity of Jesus Christ.

The insistence that Jesus was actually born of a woman and that He shared the limitations of human existence may raise a question as to whether He was truly God. The testimony of the Word is unanimous: Jesus is Divine! The deity of Jesus Christ is a cornerstone of Christian doctrine.

1. Divine names are given to Him. In many passages Christ is called “God” in such a way as to unquestionably teach His divinity, John 1:1; Hebrews 1:8; John 20:28; Titus 2:13. Again, Jesus is often called the “Son of God” and accepted the title with approval showing that He agreed with its meaning. (See Matthew 16:16-17; 8:29; 14:33; Mark 1:1; 14:61; Luke 1:35; 4:41.) Jesus is identified with God as “Son” in that He is so close to the inner divine life that He is God Himself! John 5:18 shows that Jesus’ teaching that He was the Son of God was understood by the people to mean He was equal with God. Jesus is often called “Lord.” (See Acts 4:33; 16:31; Luke 2:11; etc.) Archaeological discoveries have proven that when the New Testament writers speak of Jesus as “Lord,” there can be no question but that they thought of Him as God. Names as “the first and the last” (Revelation 1:17) and “the Alpha and Omega” (Revelation 22:13) are also elsewhere used of Jehovah. (See Isaiah 41:4, 44:6; 48:12 and Revelation 1:8.) Those who knew Jesus best declared, “He is divine.”

2. Worship which belonged to God is ascribed to Jesus Christ. Worship of men or angels is forbidden, Matthew 4:10; Revelation 22:8-9. Yet Jesus Christ unhesitatingly accepted such worship. See John 20:28; Matthew 14:33; Luke 24:52. If Christ were not God the worship here described would be sacrilegious idolatry. Christ was either God or He was an imposter. Elsewhere, God commands all men to worship the Son, even as they do the Father, John 5:23-24; Hebrews 1:6; Philippians 2:10. Moreover, it was the custom of the church in New Testament days to render worship to Christ as seen in II Corinthians 12:8-10; Acts 7:59; I Corinthians 1:2.

3. The characteristics of Deity are ascribed to Jesus Christ. He is said to have existed before the creation, John 1:1; 17:5; Colossians 1:16-17. He is self-existent and has the power to give life, John 5:21, 26; 1:4. All physical, moral, spiritual, and eternal life has its source in Him. He is immutable (unchanging), Hebrews 13:8. In fact, all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him, Colossians 2:9. This means that, as God, He has all power (Matthew 28:18), all knowledge (John 16:30; 2:24-25), and that He is present everywhere at once (Matthew 18:20; 28:20; Ephesians 1:23). Everywhere His name is coupled with that of God the Father, II Corinthians 13:14; John 14:23; 17:3. Exhibition of His deity comes in His work as Creator, John 1:3; Colossians 1:16. He upholds all things in the created world, Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3. He has the power to forgive sins, Mark 2:5-10; Luke 7:48.

Finally He is to be the Judge of all men, John 5:22. William Evans has wisely observed, “The Man of the cross is the Man of the throne.”

III. The Bodily Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, Romans 1:4.

Those who wish evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ may best find it in His life of holiness and His resurrection from the dead. These two points are unquestionable evidence. Essential to the redemption which Jesus brought was not only sacrifice, but the victory over sin's consequences in resurrection and ascension.

1. Jesus arose from physical death by the spirit returning to His physical body and causing it to live again. This is what we mean by a “bodily resurrection.” This truth is essential to Christian faith. It is set out in Matthew 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-7; John 20:1-18. Elsewhere it is mentioned in Acts 2:24, 31-32; 4:10; 17:31; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 8:34; I Corinthians 15:4, 20, 23. (The student would do well to read several, if not all, of these scriptures now.) These passages witness that Jesus' resurrection was not a spiritual resurrection in which the physical body was left dead. The same body that was put in Joseph's tomb was raised from death and inhabited by our Lord's spirit. There is sufficient witness that the tomb was left empty after the resurrection, Mark 16:6; John 20:2-7). Those who saw Him after the resurrection recognized Him as having the same body as He had before, even to the prints of the nails and spear, John 20:27; Luke 24:37-39. In I Corinthians 15 Paul writes a wonderful chapter on resurrection. He pictures the resurrection of the believers on the same order as the resurrection of Christ. There is no doubt but that he means a bodily, physical resurrection. The appearances of Christ to His followers convinced them that He had a physical body. There, is one difference, however. Christ's resurrection body was more than a natural body! It could pass through doors, John 20:19, and it was not recognizable at times, Luke 24:13-16; John 20:14-15. It could vanish and appear at will, Luke 24:31; John 20:19, 26. It was an immortal body. The resurrection body cannot die again, Romans 6:9-10; Revelation 1:18. Thus Christ has become the “first- fruits” assuring the bodily resurrection of all His disciples, I Corinthians 15:20.

2. Jesus ascended back to the Father in heaven, Acts 1:6-9. By the “ascension” of Jesus Christ we refer to the occasion in which He departed visibly from His disciples into heaven. This was a visible and bodily ascension. The disciples witnessed it. In the ascension He passed through the heavens, Hebrews 4:14; 7:26, until He took a place at the right hand of the

Father, Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:1-4. In the ascension Jesus entered into heaven as a forerunner—the rest of the children of God will follow in due time, Hebrews 6:20. John records this present ministry of Christ as preparing a place for us—making all the necessary preparations for the coming of His bride, John 14:2. Now in the presence of the Father, Jesus stands in our behalf, Hebrews 9:24. It is because of this intercessory ministry that we have answers to prayer, Romans 8:26-27, and that the repenting sinner can be saved, Hebrews 7:25. The presence of the ascended Jesus in heaven assures us that we may come into the presence of God with full confidence, Hebrews 4:14-16. Immortality is guaranteed by His continued existence. The believer can see that all things, under God's providence, are working together for his good, Romans 8:28. Everything is made subject to our glorified Lord in that the Father “*hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*” Ephesians. 1:22.

IV. The Blood Atonement of Christ Jesus for All Men, Hebrews 9:11-15.

1. Forgiveness comes through the blood (sacrifice) of Jesus Christ, verses 11-12. Our salvation is fully dependent upon the achievement of Jesus Christ. He did something that was essential for our freedom from sin, Galatians 3:13. Christ's sacrificial death was the deed of redemption. Both John and Luke make it clear that the death of Christ was a deliberate act and was the completion of a purpose that led up to that moment. In all the ministry of Jesus He can be seen moving deliberately toward the cross, Mark 8:31. Jesus was not the victim of circumstances and so was killed. He came into the world for this very purpose, having stood as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world, I Peter 1:20.

The fact that forgiveness comes only through Jesus Christ is seen in John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Salvation comes through Him because righteousness demands a sacrifice of a life for sin, Hebrews 9:22. Jesus offered Himself (His life) for sin, II Corinthians 5:21, and only therein can we be saved. However, all who believe in Him find full and free redemption through His blood, Ephesians 1:7. Thus the death of Christ becomes for us as a ransom (Matthew 20:28; I Peter 1:18; I Timothy 2:6), a propitiation (Romans 3:24; I John 2:2), a way of reconciliation (Romans 5:10; II Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 2:16), and a substitution (Isaiah 53:6; I Peter 2:24; 3:18). The offer of redemption that results is sufficient to save the whole world, I John 2:2; I Timothy 2:6. Each individual man, however sinful and ungodly, is invited to redemption, Hebrews 2:9; I Peter 3:18;

Romans 5:6-10; I Timothy 1:15.

2. The result of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a new relationship to God, verses 13-15. Verse fifteen describes this as our entering into a “new testament” (literally, “a new covenant”). This “new covenant” is best described in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 10:15-17. It involves a personal relationship with God (called “sons” or “children” of God in the New Testament). It speaks of an inner witness, in the believer (the indwelling Holy Spirit) which shows the law of God. It speaks of a full and free remission of sin so that *“their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,”* Hebrews 10:17. This freedom from sin brings the blessing of eternal life, John 5:24, and the assurance of an eternal inheritance, I Peter 1:3-5. Thus the death of Christ did something for us which we could not do for ourselves. The benefits of His death are received by all who believe in Him, John 3:14-18, 36.

CONCLUSION—Today we have seen the Bible stresses the virgin birth, deity, bodily resurrection, ascension, and atonement of Jesus Christ for fallen men. This answers the need of every person who reads these words. May the Holy Spirit quicken our minds to the significance of these truths and an implicit faith in the Redeemer—our Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the expression mean, “Christ is the center of Christianity”?
2. Give the meaning of the word, “Christian.”
3. Give the meaning and significance of the virgin birth of Jesus.
4. List three evidences of the deity of Jesus Christ. What are some of the divine names given Him?
5. Define: “bodily resurrection.”
6. Discuss the resurrection of the believers in I Corinthians 15.
7. Give the meaning and significance of the ascension of Jesus.
8. Discuss the place of Jesus' sacrifice in our salvation.
9. Discuss the place of faith in our salvation.
10. Describe the “new covenant” of Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 10.

“No one can be happy when he is not doing his best.”
— From GOD'S PECULIAR PEOPLE.