



Behold the Lamb
Publications

The Everlasting
Gospel of
Christ

Also in this issue:
Our Spiritual House

The Everlasting Gospel of Christ

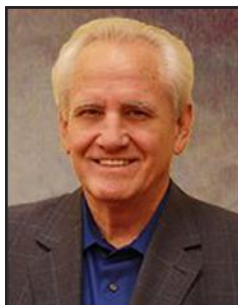
I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” Revelation 22:13

The story of Christ does not begin in a manger, at the Jordan River, or even upon a cross. Revealed in eternity past as “the WORD,” all things were made by Christ, for Christ, ...and in Christ. The scripture records “...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Yet for some reason God decided “the WORD” would be made flesh and dwell among men. The only way any person can comprehend the reason for such an event is through the Everlasting Gospel of Christ. It is the record of why Christ, who always was, and who always shall be, took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

If You Can Believe...

There is a message everyone must understand if they are to live and walk free from the bondage of sin. It is the message of “The Christ.” It is not a message of works or human effort, but it will completely change everything about the person who believes it.

The Jewish people “loved” Christ, but they rejected Jesus, as being merely “*the carpenter from Nazareth.*” Jesus told them “*If ye believe*



Leroy Surface

not that I am he (the Christ), *ye shall die in your sins*” John 8:24. Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth was “the Christ” they were looking for, but they refused to believe it. Those who did believe were “born of God.” Those who refused to believe “died in their sins” and were lost.



Keith Surface

As a young man I was told by an elder minister that I should just accept what the leaders of “our movement” told us was true rather than believe what I saw the scriptures to be saying. I chose to believe that the word of God is true. Anyone that will do the same will find the gospel of Christ to be a simple message with the power to make everyone who believes it ...free indeed!

The Everlasting Gospel of Christ

Message by: **Leroy Surface**

“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Luke 6:46

What is your answer to this question asked by Jesus? Some may say “I try to do the things Jesus said to do, but they are too difficult.” Another may answer “I really want to do what Jesus said, but sin just seems to rise up and overwhelm me.”

It is important to see that Jesus did not ask “Why do you not want to do the things which I say?” Many people want to live for God, but find it too difficult when the storms of life come against them. They are like Paul who recounts his attempt to serve God under the Law before he came to Christ. He said, *“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* Romans 7:19. A person in such a struggle to keep the sayings of Christ, usually does not have an answer as to why they do not keep his sayings. They just know that despite all their good intentions and efforts, when they are put to the test ... they fail.

Jesus actually answered this question for us all. He said, *“But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.”* Luke 6:49. The reason someone falls when the storms of life come against their experience is not because they do not try hard enough to keep his words, but rather they are unable to keep his words because their spiritual house does not have a foundation.

There is also a reason one person does the sayings of Jesus while another does not. Jesus explains this, saying, *“Whosoever cometh to*

me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.” Luke 6:47-48. The difference between the one who “*does his sayings*” and the one who “*does not his sayings*” is not how much effort or determination they put into it. When the storm arises it could be said that both houses are “determined” to stand, but the house that is not built upon the rock will ultimately fall.

The Foundation of the Church

The gospel foundation the church is built upon, and the gospel foundation every individual in the church must be built upon is revealed in the words of Peter to Jesus: “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” Matthew 16:16. Jesus said of this revelation “...*UPON THIS ROCK I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Matthew 16:18. Paul confirms this as the only foundation saying, “*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus (The) Christ.*” I Corinthians 3:11. The revelation of what it means, that Jesus is “...*the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*” John 11:27, IS the foundation, that if built upon, will stand against and overcome every storm, flood, or test that may arise. This revelation is the truth which Jesus said “*shall make you free.*” John 8:32.

If I were to ask the question, “*Who is Jesus of Nazareth?*” the answer I would receive from almost everyone would be, “*Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God.*” Of course that would be a true statement, but, it is not the “*rock*” Jesus built His church upon. The apostle John is very bold when he writes, “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is “the Christ” is born of God.*” I John 5:1. This statement can stand alone; it needs nothing more to qualify it. There is, however, one more question that must be asked of these same people; “*What...*” according to the prophecies of the scripture, “...*is The Christ?*” It is impossible to believe Jesus is “*the Christ*” if you do not know who and what “*the Christ*” is. One might satisfy himself by saying, “*Jesus is the Christ,*” and “*The Christ is Jesus.*” That is certainly the depth of many people today who profess to

believe upon Jesus. They have found absolutely nothing in their “*faith*” that will keep them in the time of storm. They struggle for a time to “*do*” the sayings of Jesus, but invariably come to a point where they are convinced Jesus never expected anyone to actually “*do*” all the things He says. But what will they answer in the day that Jesus asks this question of them, “*Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” Luke 6:46.

Who is “The Christ?”

There is only one correct answer to this question. Jesus of Nazareth is “*The Christ.*” The Apostle John’s statement, “*Whosoever believeth that **Jesus is the Christ** is born of God,*” is a powerful and absolute truth. It is not, however, a statement that is without substance as many construe it to be. Millions of people in the churches have been lulled to sleep with the teaching that if you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, you will go to heaven when you die, regardless of the sin that continues to reign in your heart and life. There is no substance to such a statement. They trust the keeping of their eternal soul to a myth. They believe a doctrine that was spawned by the devil himself I Timothy 4:1. They are the ones the apostle Paul told Timothy would come in the latter days:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” II Timothy 4:3-4

What is “The Christ?”

The “*substance*” to the statement that “*Jesus is The Christ*” is found in the answer to “*What is The Christ?*” According to the understanding of those who “*first trusted in Christ*” Ephesians 1:12, the answer is found in the writings of Moses and the prophets. It was only two days after the Holy Ghost came upon Jesus that the young man Andrew met Jesus. After spending several hours with Him, Andrew ran to his brother Peter, crying, “*We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ*” John 1:41. The next day, Phillip met Jesus, and his response was very much like Andrew’s had been the day before; “*Philip findeth Nathanael, and*

saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write ...” John 1:45.

I must confess that it almost sounds sacrilegious to ask “*What is The Christ?*” We can understand it better, however, when we ask the question regarding something we are more familiar with; “*Who, or what is the president of the United States of America?*” In answer to “*what,*” the president is the “*chief executive officer*” of our nation. He is also the “*commander in chief*” of our military forces. It is the constitution of the United States, which was drawn up and adopted by the founders of our nation that defines “*what*” the president is. The answer to “*who is the president*” will vary according to the identity of the one who holds the office at the present time.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? Matthew 22:41-45

Who is “*The Christ?*” The answer is not as simple as it may seem. Of course the “*believer*” knows the answer, but only because we have been taught that He is “*Jesus Christ.*” Most of us do not understand that “*Christ*” is not part of His name, however, but the designation of what He is. His name is Jesus; He is “*The Christ.*” The great theologians of Israel did not comprehend what “*The Christ*” was. Jesus asked them, “*What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?*” If they had believed that Jesus was Christ, they would have answered that he was the son of Joseph, the carpenter. Absurd, some may say. No! Phillip, who became one of the twelve apostles, announced with great joy on the first day he met Jesus, “*We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*” John 1:45. Phillip did not understand at the time that Jesus is the Son of God. He had found his Messiah, but he believed him to be the son of Joseph the Carpenter.

Jesus never publicly announced that He was “*the Christ.*” He often taught and questioned the people about “*the Christ*” without

revealing that He **was** “*the Christ.*” “*What do you think of Christ? whose son is He?*” The common thought among the Jews was that Christ, when he came, would be the son of David, that is, of the lineage of David, which Jesus in fact was. Jesus pointed out the fact that David called Christ his Lord, saying, “*The LORD said unto my Lord...*” Psalms 110:1. If “*the Christ*” was the son of David, why would David call Him Lord? Jesus let it be known by the scriptures that while “*the Christ*” would be “*the son of man,*” He would also be “*The Son of God.*” He never told them, however, that He was “*the Christ.*” That was a revelation they could only receive from God.

Peter was the first to receive the full revelation of who Jesus is. When Jesus questioned his disciples, “*...whom say ye that I am,*” Peter quickly answered, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” Matthew 16:16. Jesus responded to Peter’s answer, saying, “*Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven*” Matthew 16:17. This was a two part revelation to Peter. From his youth, Peter had learned of one called “*The Messiah*” (The Christ), whom God would anoint to “*finish the transgression*” and “*make an end of sins*” Daniel 9:24-25. He understood, by revelation from God, that Jesus is that very Christ. The second part of Peter’s revelation is that Jesus is “*The Son of the Living God.*” Bear with me while I ask one more question; one which may sound trivial or foolish, but is so important to understand: “***Who is the Son of God?***”

The Record God Gave

I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee. Isaiah 48:5

God is not an historian. He does not wait until after something happens, and then tell us what happened. Man can only predict, based upon current circumstances, what the future will be, but God foretells the end from the beginning. It is possible for several people to see the same event, and totally disagree, and that sincerely, about what happened at the event. If you were to see the “*impossible*” happen, some would say it did not happen, because it is “*impossible.*” With God, however, nothing is “*impossible.*”

The “*event*” that I have in mind is the crucifixion of Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees, along with the chief priests, saw the execution of a man whom they had condemned as a “*blasphemer*” and a “*deceiver.*” Many of the general population saw the wrongful death of a “*good man*” who had done many good things for them. Some of His disciples decided that they were mistaken when they once believed that He was “*The Christ*” who was to come, because the crucifixion convinced them that he was “*only*” a “*prophet from Nazareth*” Luke 24:19-21. Isn’t it amazing that the one who saw most clearly on that particular day was a dying thief who said to the dying Jesus, “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*” Luke 23:42. Almost two thousand years later, theologians look back to the crucifixion of Christ and present differing theories about what actually took place on that day.

I have heard it said that Jesus “*died on the cross*” to show us how much He loves us. According to this theory, when we see His great love for us, we will return His love by loving Him and doing our very best to live in such a way that He will be “*pleased*” with us. Consider this; Jesus did not have to die on the cross. He asked the Father, “*If it be possible, let this cup pass from me*” Matthew 26:39. He told Peter, “*I could pray the Father, and He would send me more than twelve legions of angels*” Matthew 26:53-54. If Jesus did not have to suffer the cross, there must be something very great that compelled Him to do so. Consider this also; if you really love your children, you would never “*kill yourself*” to show your great love to them. You would, however, “*lay your life down*” to save them from certain destruction. Jesus did “*lay His life down for us*” I John 3:16.

The most common theory concerning the cross of Christ today is that which is called “*penal substitution.*” It is the “*theory*” that Jesus “*died on the cross to take the penalty for our sins.*” This “*theory*” says that “*death*” is the “*punishment*” for sin; that in His great love for us, Jesus took the “*punishment (penalty)*” for our sins when He “*died for us,*” and gave us eternal life as a free gift. The truly sad part about this theory is that if it is true, it leaves us in sin as slaves to sin, but promises that we will never be “*punished*” for our sins. The adherents to this theory openly profess that they are still sinners, that they “*sin every day,*” and they will continue to sin as long as they live in a fleshly body. If that is true, they will also

“die in their sin” John 8:21-24, exactly as Jesus told the unbelieving Jews.

Another prominent view of the sufferings of Christ is that Jesus had to suffer for us so that God could forgive us when we sin. The older version of this view is that we who are forgiven should *“strive every day to reach perfection,”* which we know we can never reach by striving. According to this view, since we are *“all human”* with human frailties, we must also always be sinners, but only sin that we have not repented of can separate us from God. The more *“liberal version”* of this same view is that God has already forgiven us of all our sins; *“past, present, and future,”* and there is no reason for anyone to *“repent”* if they have already *“believed in Jesus.”*

The most recent evolution of this *“forgiveness theory”* is that the only damning sin is *“unbelief.”* Building on that basis, some have arrived at the conclusion that the only *“sin”* a believer can commit is to *“repent”* of the sins they commit every day. They confess they are still sinners who sin every day, but to repent of sin is to commit the sin of unbelief, which is the only unforgivable sin. What blindness! This is the teaching that has filled numerous *“super churches”* around the world with thousands of *“believers”* who are perfectly content to *“continue in sin, that grace may abound”* Romans 6:1.

I’ll assure you that there are many more *“theories”* of man concerning why Jesus suffered and died on the cross. The problem is, all of them ignore *“the record that God gave of His Son,”* and they *“make God to be a liar,”* because they do not believe the record God gave. God does not look back to the cross and give a blow by blow account of what Jesus did; instead, He spoke from the beginning of time, and told what His Son would do. The question is: Will we believe the record God gave?

He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. I John 5:10

The Seed of the Woman

God first began to give his record of Christ four thousand years before Jesus was born of Mary. On the same day sin entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience, God gave the promise of

one called “*the seed of the woman.*” This was the first mention of the one who would come to be known as “*The Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Genesis 3:14-15

This “*record*” God gave of His Son was not given out of “*pity*” for Adam and Eve, but out of God’s anger and wrath against the serpent. It was a “*promise*” to the serpent that a “*seed of the woman*” would “*bruise the head of the serpent.*” If Eve thought one of her sons would be the promised seed, she was certainly disappointed, because her first son was a murderer who took the life of her second son. The serpent’s influence (sin) only increased in the earth for the next sixteen hundred years, until God “*repented*” (was sorry) that He had even made man Genesis 6:7. In the great flood He destroyed every living person on earth with the exception of righteous Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. After the flood, man multiplied once more on the face of the earth, but the “*serpent*” continued to control man through the “*sin*” that is in the heart and nature of every person that is born of woman.

God with Us

Another seventeen hundred years passed, and a prophet of God by the name of Isaiah brought forth an amazing prophecy: “*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*” Isaiah 7:14. A young woman who had never been with a man would conceive and give birth to a son. She would call his name “*Immanuel,*” which means “*God with us.*” This “*seed of the woman*” would of necessity be “*the Son of God,*” hence, “*God with us.*”

It is truly wonderful how God watches over His “*word*” to perform it. The “*promise*” began with a vague mention of a “*seed of the woman,*” which would “*bruise the head of the serpent.*” Isaiah’s prophecy gives a little more insight; the “*seed of the woman*”

would be “*God with us.*” Almost two hundred years pass after the time of Isaiah’s prophecy, and God sends His special messenger, the angel Gabriel, to tell Daniel the exact year the one called “*The Messiah (The Christ)*” would appear in ministry Daniel 9:25 to “*finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness*” Daniel 9:24.

Time continued to count down for both sin and the serpent. Their “*end*” was drawing near. Gabriel not only told Daniel the very year “*the Christ*” would appear in ministry, but he also told of how he would be “*cut off (through His death on the cross), but not for Himself (but for the whole world)*” exactly three and a half years later. About five hundred years passed after Gabriel’s visit with Daniel before God sent him on three more missions to earth, first to Zechariah the priest to announce the birth of John the Baptist; then to a virgin in Galilee to reveal God’s plan for her to give birth to the Son of God, and finally to Joseph, to whom Mary was espoused, to explain Mary’s apparent pregnancy. Several months passed before his next mission, which was to announce the birth of the child to shepherds in the field. He said to them, “*Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*” Luke 2:11.

The Word Made Flesh

Christ, the creator of all things, was “*made flesh* John 1:14” in the womb of a woman. The “*Seed of the Woman*” (Jesus) was born of a virgin. He would be called, *Immanuel*, meaning “*God with us.*” The eternal “*Word*” was “*made flesh*” (prepared a human body); John 1:14 for the sole purpose of having a “*body*” to offer for the sins of fallen man. The scripture records, “*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.*” Hebrews 10:5. Can you imagine baby Jesus, lying in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, saying those words when He came into the world? No! That did not happen! Instead, it is the eternal Word, “*The Christ*” of prophecy, who spoke those words to the Father, saying, “*A body thou hast prepared me.*” He continues, saying, “*I come to do thy will, O God!*” Hebrews 10:7. It was the will of God that sent Christ into the world to suffer at the hands of sinners, shed His “*precious*” blood, and die on a cross as the “*lamb of God*” to “*take away the sin of the*

world” John 1:29. Did He do it? He did! He “bruised the head of the serpent.” Paul tells us what Jesus the Christ, did, and how He did it:

Destroying the Devil

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; **that through death he** (Jesus) **might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;** And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Hebrews 2:14-15.

Can you see what we are saying? It was on the cross that the “serpent” succeeded in bruising the “heel” (the fleshly body) of the seed of the woman, but it was through His death on the cross that Jesus Christ bruised the head of the serpent. Paul tells us clearly that it was, “...through death...He destroyed the devil (for the believer).” It is obvious that the “devil,” the “old serpent,” is alive and working on planet earth today. We see his handiwork all around us. We see his works increasingly manifested in the world, for he is “the god of this world.” There is a place, however, where there is no devil. It’s called, the “Kingdom of Christ.” Do you believe there is a “devil” in Christ? Of course not! He is absolutely destroyed for all those who “abide in Christ.” Read the record given by the apostle John:

Destroying the Works of the Devil

*“And ye know that **he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he** (Christ) **is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**”* I John 3:5-9

How wonderful these words are; yet humanly impossible to believe. John greatly simplifies these words, telling us, “Whosoever

*believeth that Jesus is **the Christ** is born of God”* I John 5:1. Do you believe Jesus is “*The Christ?*” Do you have the “*creator of all things*” dwelling in your heart by faith, and living His life through you? Do you see the promise Gabriel gave to Daniel, that “*the Messiah (the Christ)*” would make reconciliation for iniquity and make an end of sins? If you truly believe Jesus is “*the Christ*” who Gabriel promised would come to “*make an end of sins;*” that He is the “*Lamb of God*” who died to “*take away the sin of the world;*” that He is the “*Seed of the woman*” who “*bruised the head of the serpent,*” and that He destroyed the devil for every person who can, and will, believe it, then you are truly “*born of God.*” Everything He (“*the Christ*”) accomplished at the cross, He has also accomplished in you. Therefore, child of God, rejoice, and be glad, because “*The Christ*” has come to you.

The Record of “The Lamb”

And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF A LAMB for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. Genesis 22:7-8

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. John 8:56-58

The day of Abraham’s greatest test was also the day of his greatest joy. For Abraham, it was when he saw the “*Day of Christ,*” the day that God provided Himself a lamb for a sacrifice. God had instructed Abraham to go to the land of Moriah and offer his son Isaac in the place God would show him. Abraham took Isaac, along with two servants and his donkey, and traveled three days until he could see the place of sacrifice in the distance. From that point, he and Isaac finished the journey alone, with Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice and Abraham carrying the fire in his censor. As they climbed into the mountain of sacrifice, Isaac questioned his father; “*I see the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a*

burnt offering?” Abraham answered, in faith toward God, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb...”

A Willing Father

They continued up the mountain until they reached the place of sacrifice. Abraham *“built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.”* In this one verse we see two amazing things. First, we see a man who loves God, believes God, and trusts God with the life of his much beloved son who he held dearer than that life itself. The scripture tells us, *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac...accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”* Hebrews 11:17-19.

A Willing Son

The second amazing thing we see is a son that is willing to be offered. Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born. When we see Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice up the mountain, we know that he must be a strong young man at least sixteen or more years of age. Incredibly, Jewish tradition says that Isaac was actually thirty seven years old. Regardless of who is correct concerning Isaac’s age, Abraham could not have forced him in this situation; there had to be both a willing father and a willing son.

When Abraham lifted the knife to plunge it into Isaac’s heart, the angel of the Lord called to him, “Abraham, Abraham!” Abraham immediately answered, and God said, *“Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me”* Genesis 22:12. When Abraham lifted up his eyes, he saw a ram caught in a thicket, and he offered the ram in the place of his son Isaac. Oh how they rejoiced that day as the ram was offered and Isaac went free.

The Lord will provide a Lamb

Abraham called the name of that place *“Jehovah-jirah,”* which means *“The Lord will provide.”* We are told that Abraham placed that inscription before the altar. Hundreds of years later, pilgrims would see the altar and say *“In the mount of the LORD it shall be*

seen.” The inscription, “*Jehovah-jirah*” standing beside the altar of sacrifice means “*The Lord will provide Himself a lamb for a sacrifice.*” It was a promise of Christ to die for us at Calvary. It was on the same day of Abraham’s sacrifice that God gave His covenant of blessing to Abraham.

“By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice”

Genesis 22:16-18.

Abraham had not withheld his only beloved son from God, and God would not withhold His only begotten Son from the cross. A little over nineteen hundred years later, John the Baptist introduced God’s only begotten Son, Jesus, to the nation of Israel, saying, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*”
John 1:29

The Record of “The Christ”

Angels announced to shepherds in the field in the same night Jesus was born of Mary in Bethlehem, “*...unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*” Luke 2:11. How could it possibly mean anything to the shepherds that “*Christ the Lord*” had been born? They had never heard of Joseph or Mary. The name “*Jesus*” meant absolutely nothing to them, but when they heard that “*Christ*” was born, they went rejoicing to the stables to worship Him.

When the wise men came from the east, asking “*Where is he that is born King of the Jews?*” Matthew 2:2, King Herod was troubled and gathered the chief priests and scribes together, and “*...demanded of them where Christ should be born*” Matthew 2:4. How did Herod know to call the chief priests and scribes for information on the place of a child’s birth? And, how did he know that baby was one who would be called “*the Christ?*”

When Jesus was only eight days old, He was taken to the temple in Jerusalem to be circumcised. It was there that they met Simeon, an

old man of God to whom God had revealed “...*that he should not see death, before he had seen **the Lord's Christ***” Luke 2:26. When he saw the baby Jesus in the temple, he took Him in his arms and prayed, “*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation*” Luke 2:29-30. The names of Mary, Joseph, or Jesus could not have meant anything to Simeon, but he knew much about “*the Lord's Christ?*”

Thirty years later, only two days after the Holy Ghost came upon Jesus at John's baptism, the young man Andrew met Jesus for the first time, and ran to Peter, rejoicing, “*We have found the Messiah, which is, by interpretation, the Christ*” John 1:41. Again, Andrew had never heard of Jesus of Nazareth until two days before. What was the source of the great joy and excitement Andrew experienced over meeting Jesus? The answer, in each of these cases, is that the nation of Israel had been expecting the arrival of one called “*The Christ*” for over five hundred years. They knew the exact year He would appear in ministry, and they knew exactly what His mission would be when He came. It is “*the record that God gave of His Son,*” and it is found in Gabriel's words to Daniel.

The Prophecy of the Christ

*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto **THE MESSIAH** the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall **MESSIAH** be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it*

desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. Daniel 9:24-27

This is the “*record*” God gave of “*The Christ.*” It is a record of such importance that it was not given to Daniel in a dream or vision. It did not come to him through a “*word of knowledge*” or a “*prophetic utterance.*” This prophecy of “*The Christ*” is so important that God sent Gabriel, His messenger angel, to deliver it to Daniel personally.

In brief, the prophecy speaks of “*seventy weeks*” of years, which were a common reckoning of time in the Hebrew calendar. For our understanding, the duration of the prophecy would be four hundred and ninety years, which would begin when a “*decree*” was given to “*restore and build*” Jerusalem. That decree was given by King Artaxerxes of the Medes in the year 457 B.C. Exactly 483 years after the decree was given, one called “*The Messiah, the Prince*” would appear. His “*mission*” would be to accomplish six things before the end of the 490 years.

The year “*The Messiah*” was to appear in ministry was 26 A.D., which was the same year Jesus was baptized by John and the Holy Ghost came upon Him. (Note: A correction in the calendar places the birth of Jesus at around 4 B.C. probably near the end of September) The last seven years of the prophecy, which is commonly called “*the seventieth week of Daniel,*” began in the year 26 A.D. Jesus was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Ghost a little over six months into that year, based on the ancient Hebrew calendar.

Gabriel’s prophecy of the Christ goes so far as to tell us how “*The Messiah*” will fulfill His mission. He will be “*cut off, but not for Himself,*” which speaks of Christ dying for the sins of the world. It even tells the exact year the Messiah would die on the cross. “*In the midst of the week (after three and a half years) He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...*” Daniel 9:27, which Christ did when He gave His own body and blood as a propitiation for our sins. The writers of the New Testament confirm this, saying, “*Now where remission of these is, THERE IS NO MORE OFFERING FOR SIN*” Hebrews 10:18. This final “*sacrifice,*” which was “*the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” Hebrews 10:10, was offered in the

very beginning of the year 30 A.D. according to the Hebrew calendar, exactly when the “*record God gave*” says it would be. Jesus Christ was “*The Lamb of God*” which was offered to “*take away the sin of the world*” John 1:29.

Messiah’s Mission

The “*record God gave of His Son*” not only gave an exact timetable for the events before they happened, but told precisely what the Messiah would accomplish through His death on the cross. I will list them for simplification. He would...

- 1. FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION**
- 2. MAKE AN END OF SINS**
- 3. MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY**
- 4. BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS**
- 5. SEAL UP THE VISION AND PROPHECY**
- 6. ANOINT THE MOST HOLY**

This is the record God gave to Daniel for the children of Israel. This is the reason the angel of God announced the birth of Jesus as being the birth of “*a saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*” Gabriel had told Joseph to “*call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*” Oh, what a savior. Oh, what joy, the Christ has come. The last of the six promises was the first to be fulfilled when the Holy Ghost came upon Jesus at John’s baptism; the “*Most Holy*” was anointed for the mission that lie ahead of Him. Hear the words of Jesus: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me...*” Luke 4:18.

In His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, Jesus would “*seal up the vision and prophecy.*” The apostle John was an eye witness of everything that happened to Jesus in His sufferings on the cross. He writes, “*After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst*” John 19:28. Every prophecy of the sufferings of Christ was fulfilled when Jesus gave His life for the sin of the world. There was nothing left undone for the redemption and reconciliation of fallen man. Sin had come into the world through Adam’s disobedience Romans 5:12,

and it was “*taken away*” by the obedience of “*The Christ*” to the death of the CROSS Philippians 2:8, Romans 5:19.

Did Christ Fail?

Almost every Christian believes that Christ made reconciliation for iniquity on the cross just as Gabriel said that he would. This, of course, is true. Yet this is just one of six things Gabriel said would be accomplished with the coming of the Christ. Why is it that so many refuse to accept the truth that Christ accomplished everything he came to do? If he did not fail to make reconciliation for iniquity, then neither did he fail to make an end of sins or to bring in everlasting righteousness. If Christ failed in what he came to accomplish he would have never been raised from the dead. Paul reminds us, “*And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*” I Corinthians 15:17. There are only two scenarios given in the scripture as to why someone is still in their sins. **1.** Christ failed to make an end of sins. **2.** They do not believe the record God gave of his son. Do you believe Christ failed?

Believing in Jesus

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

What does it mean to “*believe in Jesus?*” Is it true that if you simply believe in the historic fact of his life and ministry on earth that you “*will not perish, but have everlasting life?*” Do you have a guarantee of heaven when you die as long as you believe Jesus is the Son of God? If these things are not true, then what must I believe to be saved? What does it really mean to “*believe in Jesus?*” The apostle John tells us what it means in a very few words; “***Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God***” I John 5:1. “Whew!” What a sigh of relief! “*Preacher, you mean that I really am going to heaven if I believe in Jesus Christ. Great! I’ve ‘believed in him’ all my life.*” Stop. That is not what the apostle said. Listen to his words again; “*whosoever believeth that **JESUS IS THE CHRIST** is born of God.*” It is very simple, if you understand what “*The Christ*” is.

The Jews in the generation of Jesus understood very much about “*The Christ*” from the prophecies of the scriptures. Paul asks the question, “*What advantage then hath the Jew?*” Romans 3:1. He answers his own question, saying, “*Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God*” Romans 3:2. Moses and the prophets spoke the words of God to the children of Israel as the Holy Ghost moved upon them. II Peter 1:21. These words, which were recorded in the scriptures, are filled with mentions of a redeemer to come, variously called “*The seed of the woman,*” “*Immanuel*” “*The Messiah,*” “*Wonderful,*” “*The Branch,*” “*The Servant,*” etc.

The Record of the Scriptures

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” John 5:39-40.

The Jews did search the scriptures. They knew the wonderful promises of redemption that were in them. They believed the words of Isaiah which say, “*the redeemer shall come to Zion*” Isaiah 59:20. They loved the promise of “*The Christ (The Messiah)*” who would come to “*finish the transgression and make an end of sins.*” By the scriptures they knew what He would be, where He would be born, when He would come in ministry, and what He would do. They understood everything except “*how*” He would do it. They taught these wonderful promises to the people from generation to generation. They knew they were living in the generation of His appearing, and in fact, the very year of His coming had arrived, but when He appeared, they would have nothing to do with Him. They did not believe Jesus was the Messiah God had promised would come. Jesus told them, “*You search the scriptures, seeking for eternal life. The scriptures tell of me, but you will not come to me, that you might have life.*” It was certainly a shame that those he came to would not believe upon him, but God had promised Abraham that in his seed (Christ) ALL NATIONS would be blessed!

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

John 1:11-12.

What the First “Believers” Believed

Peter leads the way with his revelation from the Father; *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* Peter understood by this saying that Jesus was the one the entire nation of Israel had longed for, for over five hundred years. As *“The Christ,”* He was the one who would *“make an end of sins”* and *“bring in everlasting righteousness.”* As *“The Son of the living God”* who was *“born of a woman,”* Peter understood that Jesus was *“the seed of the woman”* whom God had promised to *“bruise the head of the serpent.”* He was *“The Redeemer”* Isaiah said would *“come to Zion”* Isaiah 59:20. Peter understood that Jesus was the fulfillment of every promise of redemption God had given throughout the ages of time.

Martha’s faith was tested when her brother Lazarus died. She, along with her sister Mary, had sent word for Jesus to come as soon as they knew the danger Lazarus was in. Jesus purposely waited until He knew that Lazarus was dead before starting His journey to Bethany, the home of Lazarus and his two sisters. When He arrived, Martha was very disappointed, because Lazarus had been buried four days before. She said to Jesus, *“If you had been here, my brother would not have died.”* Jesus said, *“Lazarus shall rise again.”* Martha responded, *“I know that he will rise in the last day at the resurrection.”* At this, Jesus told her something He had never said before; *“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”* John 11:25-26. Martha answered with her *“statement of faith;”* *“Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world”* John 11:27. *“Believing in Jesus”* is to believe that He is *“The Christ”* who came into the world to *“make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25. It is to believe that He is *“the Son of God”* who came to *“destroy the works of the devil”* I John 3:8.

The sixth chapter of John begins with the miracle of feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. The next day Jesus and His disciples were on the other side of the Sea of Galilee when the multitude from the previous day found Him, wanting more

bread and fish from Him. Jesus knew what they wanted Him to do for them, and began to speak clearly to them concerning who He is.

“I am the bread of life...” John 6:35; *“I came down from heaven...”* John 6:38; *“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day;”* John 6:54; *“As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me”* John 6:57.

Jesus spoke these amazing sayings to those Jews who followed Him only because of the loaves and fishes, but His own disciples overheard his words. In verse sixty, we read, *“Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?”* Jesus then turned to his disciples and said, *“Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not”* John 6:61-64. This is where many of his disciples left him. John tells us, *“From that time **many of his disciples went back**, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And **we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God**”* John 6:66-69. This is what it means to *“believe in Jesus.”*

He That Believeth Not...

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:15-16

Preach the gospel to every creature! Tell them Jesus is the Christ who came into the world to make an end of sins. Tell them He is the Son of God who came to destroy the works of the devil. Assure them that His mission was accomplished through His death on the cross, and that God proved it to all men when He raised Jesus from the dead the third day. Tell them they can go free from sin; that they need no longer to be slaves to the sin which dwells in their heart and nature. Good news! Glad tidings of great joy! The Christ has come! The seed of the woman has bruised the head of the serpent!

Jesus has destroyed the devil! The victory has been won and God has given it to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Tell these things in no uncertain terms to the lost souls in the world. Do not require anything of them but to believe the truth and trust in Him who died for us. Jesus said those who believe it “*shall be saved,*” and those who “*believe it not, shall be damned*” Mark 16:16. Oh! What a horrible thought that people who Jesus died for will be damned; some because they refuse to believe the truth and some because they have never heard the truth. Listen to what Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews in His day.

“I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in you sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.” John 8:21

It is hard to accept that anyone could both “*seek Him*” and “*die in their sins,*” but that is exactly what Jesus told the Jews they would do. In fact, they have never ceased, since that day, to “*seek*” for their Messiah to come. There is a “wall” in the old city of Jerusalem that is called “*The Wailing Wall.*” It is the only part of the temple complex that remained after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Many Jews go to the Wailing Wall every day, praying to God to send the Messiah. They believe that when he comes he will take evil out of the world and usher in an era of peace on earth. It is an amazing fact that the Jew understands the mission of “*The Christ*” better than the modern church does. My good friend, a devout Jew, told me years ago that if Jesus had been his Messiah, he would have “*made an end of sins.*” Recently I heard a Rabbi debate the issue on TV. His final point was, “Jesus could not have been the Messiah. If he had been the Messiah, he would have taken evil out of the world.” Their faith concerning “*The Christ (Messiah)*” is correct. They do not understand the words of Jesus to the Pharisees, however, when He said, “*The kingdom of God is within you.*” It is “*within*” the one who “*trusts in Him*” that sin is “*taken away.*” Jesus is “*The Christ,*” and He did “*make an end of sins*” in the heart and nature of everyone who trusts in Him, because He is “*The Christ.*”

Dying in Sin

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said

therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins. John 8:23-24

Millions of people gather in churches every Sunday to worship Jesus. They have confessed Him with their mouth and believed in their heart that God raised Him from the dead, but they are still “*dying in their sins.*” This fact cannot be denied, because they also “*confess with their mouth*” that they are still sinners; that, in fact, they sin every day, and will be sinners as long as they live in a body of flesh. They, along with the unbelieving Jews, are condemned to die in their sins. This is what it really means to “*be damned*” if they “*believe not;*” they are “*condemned*” to “*die in their sins*” because they do not believe Jesus is the Christ whose mission on earth was to take away their sin. Those who refuse to believe the truth are damned because they believe a lie II Thessalonians 2:12. They will be condemned by Christ in the Day of Judgment as a “*worker of iniquity*” Matthew 7:22-23 because they have not believed that Jesus of Nazareth is “*The Christ*” who came into the world specifically to “*make an end of sins,*” and that He did so through His death on the cross.

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:8-9

In the Beginning...was Christ

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3

In three separate places in the book of Revelation, Jesus introduces Himself, saying, “*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end....*” A fourth time He calls Himself “*...the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God*” Revelation 3:14. Christ is eternal. He existed eternally as one the apostle John calls “*The Word*” before He was born of Mary some four thousand years after “*time*” began with the entrance of sin. When John

speaks of “*The Word*,” he is speaking of Christ. He uses the Greek word “*logos*,” which gives us a beautiful description of “*what*” Christ is. While it is true, according to Strong’s Greek dictionary, that the Greek word “*logos*” can refer to “*something said*” or a “*topic of conversation*,” whenever it is preceded with the article “*the*,” it is always understood to say, “*The Divine Expression*.” Christ is “*The Divine Expression of God*.” He is eternally existent with God, and He is God. John tells us that Christ was “*with God*,” that He “*was God*,” and that He was “*in the beginning with God*.” God has never expressed Himself except through Christ. Even in creation, the apostle John tells us, “*All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made*” John 1:3. God does nothing except He does it “*through Christ*.”

He who was from the Beginning

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; I John 1:1

Genesis 1:1, John 1:1, and I John 1:1 all speak of the same “*beginning*,” which takes us back to the creation of the universe, and He who was there before any “*thing*” was created. In I John 1:1, the phrase “*That which was from the beginning*,” is more properly understood to say “**He who** *was from the beginning*.” In the first chapter of his gospel, John introduces Him as “*The Word*.” In John 1:10 we read, “*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not*.” John continues in verse fourteen to say, “*...and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...*” John 1:14. It is “*the Word made flesh*” that John introduces in his epistle. The “*Word*” is Christ; the “*Word made flesh*” is Jesus Christ, “*...whom we have heard, whom we have seen with our eyes, whom we have looked upon, and our hand have handled*” I John 1:1. John makes the connection for us that Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of Mary and lived among us for about thirty three and a half years, is also the eternal Christ who was “*in the beginning*,” and by whom “*all things were made, that were made*.” It was proven that Jesus is “*The Christ, the Son of the living God*” Matthew 16:16 when God raised Him from the dead Romans 1:4.

When Christ dwells in His people Galatians 2:20, He is not the baby Jesus in a manger, or the twelve year old Jesus confounding the lawyers in the Temple. Living in His people, He is Christ, **the creator** of all things; He is Christ, **the seed**, who bruised the head of the serpent; He is Christ, **the Messiah**, who made an end of sins; He is Christ, **the Son**, who destroyed the works of the devil, and He is Christ, **the Lamb**, which took away the sin of the world. Do you believe that Jesus is "*The Christ?*" Do you believe that He did everything God sent Him to do? If so, you are born of God. You are a new creature, and Christ lives in you. Oh Rejoice! The Christ has come. He has "*made an end of sins*" and "*brought in everlasting righteousness*" for you. He is "*the Lamb*" that God provided to "*take away your sin,*" and you have it no more. Rejoice in Christ Jesus! He is "*the seed of the woman*" who "*bruised the head of the serpent;*" the "*Son of God*" who "*destroyed the works of the devil.*" He did it all at the cross for those who trust in Him. Do you believe? Then let the rejoicing begin!

Our Spiritual House

Message by: Keith Surface

I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ in January 1984. Being so overwhelmed with the mercy, love, and grace He so freely gave, I wanted everything in my life to be about Him. I was in every service, every prayer-meeting, and every revival as I sought the Lord continuously for the fullness of His Spirit and to know Him in every way I could. The word of God began to roll in my spirit until I began first to teach and later preach the things I would see in His word. In that day, as in this day, there were many ministers of great renown who appeared to me to be doing so much for God. I would see the preacher on TV and was moved by what they seemed to be doing, but at the same time I was often checked in my spirit. Whenever a child of God feels that “check” in their spirit it is a warning that they should take seriously. But who was I to question these who had every appearance of doing so much for the name of the Lord. In the spring of 1987 the Lord visited me with a vision in the night hours. This is what I saw:

My Spiritual House

I had purchased a piece of land upon which I was planning to build my house. The property was a large acreage tract filled with beautiful century old oak trees. I looked forward with anticipation to the day that I would occupy my new home, but I was troubled in the vision and unsure about what course to take. What troubled me was the feeling that instead of hiring a builder, I should build this house myself. I was just a young man and my only construction experience was as a helper for others. Yet in the vision I could not help but feel that if I would use a level and a framing square I would be able to build this house. But doubts flooded my mind and I began to inquire of other builders to build this house for me. I looked at the houses

they had constructed and was overwhelmed at the size and beauty of the buildings. Every time I started to choose a builder I would be troubled about it and feel as though I should take up my level and square and build the house myself. Finally I convinced myself that hiring the builder was the right course to take, so I put my future home into the hands of an experienced builder.

The vision moved forward to a day that my house was near completion. I invited two pastors and their wives to come with me to see my new house. As we drove up the driveway lined with the beautiful oak trees and caught our first glimpse of this new home, my heart was ready to burst with pride. The massive columns that supported the roof at the entrance of the home looked to be twenty feet tall and a huge porch wrapped around the front of the house. The front door was fine handcrafted wood embedded with etched glass. As we walked through the entry I began to point out the imported tiles, the fine woodwork and wall coverings such as I had never seen before. Before me stood a beautiful spiral stairway, which we walked up admiring the craftsmanship of the railings and banister. We proceeded down a hallway that seemed to go on forever and I began to open doors and show off the various different rooms.

As my guest toured one room, I stepped out onto a balcony and happened to notice that the banister was leaning a bit. Not to worry, I would speak to my builder and have it corrected. The next room we entered I saw a small hairline crack in the wall and quickly moved my guests out of the room, hoping they did not see it. As I began to go from room to room the flaws became larger and more evident. I saw leaning floors, gaping cracks in the ceiling, and floors that were buckled. Panic took hold of me and I began to run down the hallway, room to room, only to find each room worse than the one before. The floor started to move under my feet in such a way that I realized there was no foundation supporting the structure and the entire building was in danger of falling upon us.

In panic I raced towards the stairway only to find the railings were now just sticks tied together with twine. The steps had turned into rotten planks with broken places where one could easily fall to their death. Amazingly, I was able to reach the bottom of the stairway.

There, the once beautiful wall coverings were now old strips of cheesecloth that were peeling off the wall and the air was filled with the musty stench of decay. I stood in the entryway that I had once been so proud of, and being aware that my house might at any second fall upon me, I looked up and cried with a loud voice, “*My God, My God, I knew I should have built this house myself!*”

The Stone the Builders Rejected

I awoke the next morning troubled, knowing that God had spoken to me, but not understanding what the message was. I was led to the passage of scripture that both Jesus and Peter quoted from Psalm 118. “*The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner*” 1 Peter 2:7. I knew then that this was instruction from the Lord not to turn to the religious builders of that day. Not because they might not be good men and even sincere, but just as it had been in the days of Jesus, the builders were rejecting the foundation. At the time I did not even understand what the foundation was, but I knew I would not find it in the houses of the great religious builders. Still, even as in the vision, I was unsure that I could build a house that would stand? Again the Lord took me to the scriptures.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place” Isaiah 28:16-17

When I read where God spoke of the line and the plummet I understood what He was speaking to me concerning the level and the square. No one needs to be afraid or ashamed to build if they will prayerfully build with the simple provisions that God has given to us. Let the word of God say what it says. Let it be the measure of truth. The truth is never afraid to be measured by the word of God. Do not ignore the voice of the Spirit, even when He speaks contrary to the traditions of men. And do not be intimidated by the great religious builders. Trust God and He, through you, will build a house that will stand.

A Proper Foundation

Anyone who understands construction knows the importance of a good foundation. Can you imagine laying the foundation for a custom home and when the walls begin to be raised you realize that the foundation has been laid to the wrong dimensions? It happens! I have seen houses that had to be redesigned after the foundation was laid because the foundation was wrong. A foundation that is slightly out of level or out of square can produce nightmares for those who attempt to bring the structure together. What may seem to be hairline cracks in the floor can cause massive shifting and cracking in the walls and ceiling. The foundation is not the whole house, but the whole house will be built on the foundation; therefore the foundation is the most critical part of any structure.

The apostle Paul laid the gospel foundation of the church as God had instructed him, and there could be no other foundation laid. Any change would cause great error to enter the church. Anything left undone and the whole of the building would be adversely affected. Paul was very adamant, "*other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ.*" This was a warning for his generation and all that would follow; the foundation must be right or the entire building will be wrong.

Built on Sand

It was the foolish man who built his house upon the sand. Would you set out to build your dream home in a swamp or on unstable ground? Or, would you raise the walls of a building without any foundation under it? I trust not! How about your eternal soul? Are you trusting in a religious house as your eternal habitation, yet not certain that the house is sound? Do you see scriptural flaws in the things you have been taught, but are told to not to worry about it? Are you certain the doctrines you have trusted line up with the word of God? It is not good enough to say, "*I just believe what I was always taught.*" Remember, this is your soul. It is your spiritual house.

My pastor always told the congregation that if you cannot go to the scripture and show why you believe what you believe, then you have no right to believe it. Well, perhaps you do have a right to

believe it, but you are very foolish to do so. The scriptures show us that religious builders have again and again rejected God's foundation. If the only foundation you have is that which you received from a religious builder, how do you know it is a sure foundation? There is however, one builder who was commissioned and entrusted by God Himself with laying the gospel foundation for the church of Jesus Christ. His name was Paul the Apostle.

Paul's Credentials

The revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ was committed to the apostle Paul. He did not take this position upon himself, rather he was ordained of God for this purpose. He said, "... *I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*" Galatians 1:11-12. His commission was to preach the gospel and lay the foundation just as he had received it from the Lord. So certain was Paul of the gospel he preached that he said, "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*" Galatians 1:8. Having received the gospel by revelation of Jesus Christ, his instruction must have been similar to that which God spoke to Moses when he said, "*See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.*" "

A Wise Master Builder

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 3:10-11

The apostle Paul uses the first three chapters of I Corinthians to bring us to this statement: "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*" I Corinthians 3:11. He is adamant that the foundation which he laid is the only foundation that can be laid. Anything that is built without this foundation has no foundation at all.

Paul was concerned about what those who came after him would build upon the foundation. Some would build good things like

“gold, silver, precious stones,” and some would build worthless things, like “wood, hay, stubble.” He knew that everything would be tested by fire. He said, “...the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.” I Corinthians 3:13. The good would remain and the worthless would be destroyed. But, what happens if what is built is not on the foundation at all? The sad answer is that the good will pass away along with the worthless.

The True Foundation

Paul describes the true foundation in several similar phrases. He describes it as “*The preaching of the Cross*,” I Corinthians 1:18, “*Christ Crucified*” ch1:23, “*Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified*,” ch2:2 and “*Jesus Christ*” ch3:11. Each of these express the same foundation in slightly different ways. Let’s consider the three messages of these simple words, “*Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified*.”

1. Jesus: This speaks of the man who was born of a virgin, placed in a manger, baptized by John the Baptist, worked miracles, taught the people, was betrayed, crucified, and raised from the dead.

2. Christ: Whenever we read the words “*Jesus Christ*” it helps our understanding to remember this speaks of “*Jesus, the Christ*.” This reminds us that Christ is not the name of a man, but the eternal identity of the one who would fulfill every promise of redemption. “*The Christ*” is not just a man. He is the one by whom all things were made. He was “*with God and was God*” John1:1-3. He would be the Son of God Psalms 2, and he would bruise the head of the serpent Genesis 3:15.

Perhaps the clearest prophecy of “the Christ” are the words brought to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. Gabriel describes the mission of The Christ as “*to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy*.” Daniel 9:24-25. Being anointed “*The Most Holy*” by his Father, Jesus the Christ fulfilled every vision and prophecy of redemption when he died and rose again. Jesus is THE CHRIST!

3. “...and him crucified:” This tells us how Jesus the Christ accomplished what he was sent into the world to do. Through his death he “*destroyed the devil*” Hebrews 2:14, “*crucified our old man*”

and “*destroyed our body of sin*” Romans 6:6, “*sanctified us with his own blood*” Hebrews 13:12, and “*blotted out*” the Law by “*nailing it to his cross*” Colossians 2:14. Everything Christ came into the world to do, he accomplished through his crucifixion and resurrection. It is the only way given by God for anyone to be made free from sin, cleansed from all unrighteousness, made a new creature, and reconciled to God. These things do not come through philosophy, discipleship, time, trials, or wisdom. The fullness of redemption is received through simple faith in “Jesus the Christ, and Him Crucified.” This is the foundation of the church.

Without a Foundation

Paul was concerned in his day about those who attempted to build worthless things on the good foundation he had laid. Those are things the fire will burn away. In our day, however, a greater tragedy awaits. On every hand, religious things are being built, both good and worthless, without a foundation at all. When we attempt to give spiritual things to people who have never been washed from their sins by the blood of Christ, we are attempting to beautify a house that was built without a foundation. When we seek to do such things, we are not saving souls, but “locking them in” to their damnation. In the end it will all come to nothing. The words spoken may be true, but they will not stand when the flood Jesus spoke of arises. He let us know that even the best house, if it is built upon the sand, will wash away. Matthew 7:26-27.

Grind Him to Powder

“Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” Luke 20:18.

The true foundation of “*Jesus the Christ, and him crucified*” cannot be built on top of or added to anything else. The effect it has is as though one attempted to lay the foundation stones of a building on the roof of the structure. The stones will crush the roof and everything under it without regard to how well it may have been built. Jesus revealed this truth saying, “*...but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*” We are instructed to fall upon Christ and be broken, lest his truth fall upon us also and grind us to powder. Simple gospel preaching destroys everything in its

path, but it lays the foundation for a building that will stand when everything else falls.

Your Spiritual House

Your building is your spiritual house. It is your life, both now and for eternity. It is the habitation of your eternal soul. The stakes are too high for you not to be sure it is built upon the only foundation God provided, which is Jesus the Christ. In the vision I shared earlier, I was afraid to build my house using the simple tools I possessed, so I entrusted my spiritual house to builders who built without a foundation. Do not make that mistake. Do not be afraid to believe what you see in the scriptures regarding the work of Christ. Prayerfully take God's word to heart. Believe it! Stand upon it! Some will laugh and scoff. Others may even cast your name out as evil. But if you will stand upon the truth of the gospel of Christ, your house will stand in the day that comes to try every man's work. When spiritual houses are burning and falling on every side, you will be so glad that you built upon the foundation, which is JESUS THE CHRIST!

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