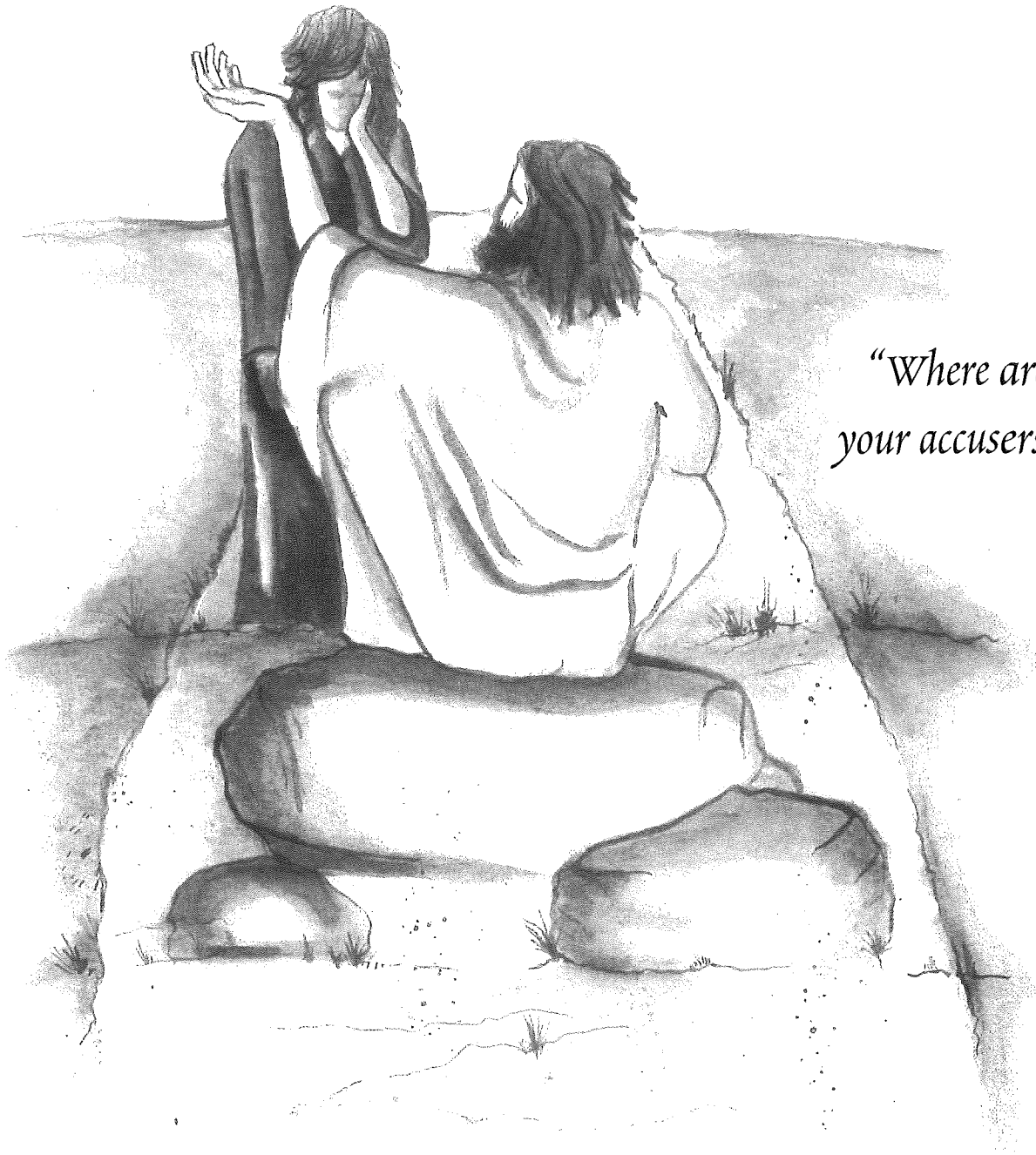


Chapter Eight



*"Where are
your accusers?"*

The Saving Work Of Jesus Christ

VIII. THE SAVING WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

Introduction: **Christians call Jesus their Lord and Savior: *WE THUS CONFESS THAT WE NEED A LORD (A RULER) AND A SAVIOR (SOMEONE WHO RESCUES US FROM A PLACE OF DANGER). JESUS IS ALL OF THIS AND MORE.***

Beginning with Moses, God not only took a nation to be His special people, but He gave them three different types of leaders: **Prophets, Kings, and Priests**. These three offices, or positions of leadership, showed what people need if they are to live useful and good lives. **In Jesus, and the Kingdom that He establishes, God gave us a perfect Prophet, Priest and King—all in One Person!**

1. A Prophet

Jesus, as a Heaven-sent Prophet is more than a prophet, For He not only reveals what God is like, but He is Himself, God. Hence, all Jesus is, as well as what He says and does, is a revealing of God. No one can add to, or improve upon, the Revelation which God gave to us in His Son.

John 1:17-18 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is **God the only Son**, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. (NRSV)

John 12:48-49 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; **that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.** For I did not speak of my own accord, but **the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.** (NIV)

John 14:23 (Jesus) "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (NIV)

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. (NIV)

John 15:24 If I had not done among them **the works that no one else did**, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. (NRSV)

John 17:6-8 (Jesus' High Priestly Prayer for His disciples) "**I have revealed you to those** whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. **For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them.** They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." (NIV)

II Cor. 4:6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (NRSV)

See also Chapter One, p. 17 – Jesus, as the Final Revelation of God: *Matthew 17:5; Luke 24:44-45; John 1:18; John 5:39-40; John 14:8-10; Hebrews 1:1-2*

2. A King

As a heaven-sent king, Jesus sought to re-assert God's rightful rule over humanity (and He is still doing this!).

The Bible teaches that mankind is under the sway of Satan and the powers of evil. In this state we are sinful, and cannot overcome the power of sin in our lives. We are also under God's wrath and subject to death and punishment. Thus, in Jesus, God is "invading" His own earth, seeking to destroy the powers of evil, freeing mankind from bondage to sin, death and judgment, and giving us a new freedom, dignity and life in the Kingdom of His Son, Jesus. (See Chapter 3, 4.B.1)

Jesus, then, is the rightful King, seeking to regain what has been lost to God, and through His preaching, miracles, suffering, death and resurrection, He proclaimed that God was reasserting and reclaiming His rightful control over the human race. The **"Reign of God has Arrived!" (or, the Kingdom of God)**. The Kingdom of God, **or Reign of God, through Jesus Christ, is the main theme in much of His teaching.**

Consider the following Bible passages:

Luke 11:14-23 Now he was casting out a demon that was mute; when the demon had gone out, the one who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed. But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."... But he knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? —for you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul. Now if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger* of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. (*Matthew has Spirit of God") When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. (NRSV) (A similar account is in *Matthew 12:22-30, Mark 3:20-21*)

Note from this account that: 1. Satan has a Kingdom. 2. Jesus, 'the stronger than he' is assaulting Satan's kingdom by freeing human beings from demon-control. 3. When He does this it shows that 'the Kingdom of God' (His rule) has come into our midst in the Person of Jesus. (See illustration on opposite page)

1 John 3:8 Whoever continues to sin belongs to the Devil, because the Devil has sinned from the very beginning. The Son of God appeared for this very reason, to destroy the Devil's works. (TEV)

2. A King (Cont'd)

Acts 26:16b-18 (Jesus' Words to Paul at the time of his conversion) '...I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' (NIV)

Thus 'salvation' consists in more than just forgiveness of sins – it means we are torn out of Satan's control over our lives and brought under the loving, and gracious rule of God's Son, Jesus Christ, whom the Father has appointed as the rightful Ruler of all mankind.

To come under Christ's rule AND ENTER HIS KINGDOM, ONE MUST:

- A. **Repent** (turn back to God in your heart and become obedient).
- B. **Accept Jesus as your Savior** from sin, death and hell, and be baptized.
- C. **Accept Jesus as the rightful Lord of your life** and begin to learn and follow His teachings.

A. Repentance: A sincere change of heart IN WHICH A PERSON turns away FROM A LIFE OF SIN TO A LIFE GIVEN OVER TO GOD.

Is. 55:6-7 Seek the Lord while he is present, call to him while he is close at hand. Let the wicked abandon their ways and the evil their thoughts: let them **return to the Lord**, who will take pity on them, and to our God, for he will freely forgive. (REB)

Joel 2:12-13 Yet even now, says the LORD, **return to me with all your heart**, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. **Return to the LORD, your God**, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. (NRSV)

Luke 24:46-7 (Jesus) said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that **repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations...**" (NRSV)

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (NRSV)

2.A. (Cont'd)

Acts 17:30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent. (NRSV)

Acts 20:21 (Paul) I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. (NIV)

B. Faith in Jesus Christ: By putting our trust in Jesus WHO DIED FOR US, AND ACCEPTING BAPTISM IN HIS NAME, OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN, AND FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS RESTORED AND THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IMPARTED TO US.

Rom. 3:23-25a For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified (declared righteous) freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, **through faith in his blood...** (NIV)

2. (Cont'd)

C. Acceptance of Jesus as our new Lord. *MEMBERSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD INVOLVES OBEDIENCE AND SERVICE TO THE KING, JESUS. WE LEARN HIS TEACHINGS AND SEEK TO FAITHFULLY FOLLOW THEM AND PRACTICE THEM. THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN IS UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.*

Matt. 7:24-27 Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine **and does not act on them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall! (NRSV)

Matt. 21:31b-32 Jesus said to them (unbelieving Jewish leaders), “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes **are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.** For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, **you did not repent and believe him.**” (NIV)

Mark 1:14-15 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming **the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”** (The Gospel) (NIV)

Luke 6:46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and **do not do what I tell you?**” (NRSV)

John 12:25-26 “He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me,** the Father will honor him.” (RSV)

Rom. 6:12-13 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but **yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness.** (RSV)

Rom. 14:17-18 For **the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking,** but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because **anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.** (NIV)

See also: *Acts 26:16-18; Rom. 12:11; Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:24; Rev 7:15; Rev 22:3.*

3. A Priest

As a priest Jesus offered himself on the cross as a holy sacrifice to atone for the sin and guilt of all humanity. Having once offered Himself for all, as a substitute for guilty mankind, He now prays, pleads for, and obtains forgiveness, patience, help for all those who trust in Him.

A. Our Substitute

Jesus led a perfect life of love and obedience thus fulfilling God's Law for us. Jesus took our sins and guilt upon Himself, took it to the Cross and there **bore the punishment which we deserved** (vicarious atonement).

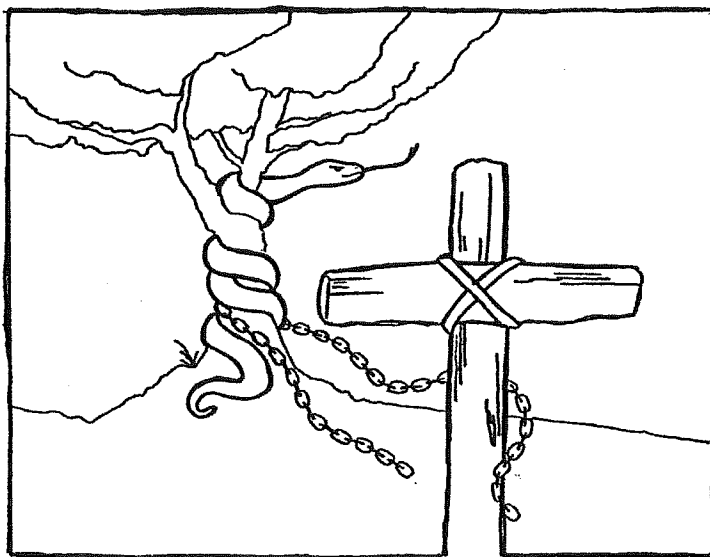
Rom. 5:19 For just as by the one man's disobedience (Adam's) the many were made sinners, so **by the one man's obedience (Christ's) the many will be made righteous.** (NRSV)

II Cor. 5:19-21 ...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, **not counting their trespasses against them**, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **For our sake He made Him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.** (RSV)

I Pet. 2:24a He himself **bore our sins in his body on the tree**, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. (NIV)

See also: *Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12.*

Adam's
Tree
Made
Us
Slaves



Romans 5:6-21 *The Cross-Tree*
Freed Us!

3. (Cont'd)

B. A perfect sacrifice for sin. *THE one, perfect sacrifice OF JESUS UPON THE CROSS COMPLETELY wipes out the sins of all people for all time. UNLIKE ANIMAL SACRIFICES WHERE THE ANIMALS HAD NO CHOICE WHETHER OR NOT TO DIE, JESUS' SACRIFICE WAS A CONSCIOUS, WILLING, LOVING ACT OF OBEDIENCE (HEBREWS 10:3-9). NOTHING ELSE IS NEEDED FOR SALVATION EXCEPT THAT EACH PERSON MUST turn to God IN REPENTANCE AND in faith accept what God offers us because of Jesus.*

John 19:30 "...It is finished." (said by Jesus as He was dying on the Cross) (NRSV)

Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**.
(NRSV)

Heb. 9:25-28 Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, **he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.** And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, so Christ, **having been offered once to bear the sins of many**, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.
(NRSV)

I John 1:7 ...the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (Note: the present tense in the Greek has the force of '**keeps on cleansing** us...') (NRSV)

See also: *Rom. 3:21-26; I Peter 2:21-24; 3:18.*



If You Are Lost Forever...Don't Blame Jesus!

3. (Cont'd)

C. Received by faith. *THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE (SUCH AS FORGIVENESS OF SINS, RESTORATION TO GOD'S FAVOR, ETERNAL LIFE) ARE OFFERED TO US AS A FREE GIFT, AND BECOME OURS WHEN WE ACCEPT THEM BY FAITH. This is what it means to 'believe in Jesus.'* *IT ALSO MEANS THAT WE NO LONGER TRUST IN OUR OWN PERFORMANCE, GOOD OR BAD, OR WORRY OVER OUR SINS, BUT simply put our trust in what God has done for us and gives to us through faith in His Son, Jesus (SEE ALSO CH 9:10-16).*

Rom. 3:20-25a Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a **righteousness from God**, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.** There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, **through faith in his blood.** (NIV)

Rom. 5:17 If, because of one man's trespass, (**Adam's**), death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and **the free gift of righteousness** reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (RSV)

John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.... Whoever believes in him is not condemned**, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (NIV)

I Pet. 1:18,21 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.... Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, **so that your faith and hope are set on God.** (NRSV)

4. **Following His death as a substitute for the human race**, Christ descended into hell (**hades**, in the Greek), and on the third day was resurrected by the Father from the dead.

A. His descent into Hell (Hades)

Eph. 4:8-10 As the scripture says, "When he went up to the very heights, he took many captives with him; he gave gifts to people." Now, what does "he went up" mean? It means that first he came down to the lowest depths of the earth. So the one who came down is the same one who went up, above and beyond the heavens, to fill the whole universe with his presence. (TEV)

I Pet. 3:18-20 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and **preached** (Greek **ekeruxen**) to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah... (NIV)

Rev. 1:17b-18 Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And **I hold the keys of death and Hades.**" (NIV)

The New Testament (see *Acts 2:27.31*; *Rom 10:6-8*; *Eph. 4:8-10*) teaches that Christ, after his death, descended into **Hades**, and that He there "**preached to the spirits in prison who formerly did not obey.**" The word translated "preached" is the normal word used in the New Testament for **preaching the Gospel** (though it can be used as a proclamation of judgment). Many commentators link this passage with *I Peter 4:6*, "**For this is why the Gospel was preached even to the dead that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God.**"

The earliest Christian writers (after the Apostles) understood the Descent into Hell differently. Justin Martyr wrote, "The Lord God, the Holy God of Israel, remembered His dead, those sleeping in the earth, and came down to them to tell them the Good News of salvation." (Wm. Barclay, *Daily Study Bible, Revised Ed.*, Vol. 14, I Peter, p. 242, 1976)

Though the purpose of Christ's descent into hell (hades) is obscure, and it is not wise to speculate about it, this much is clear:

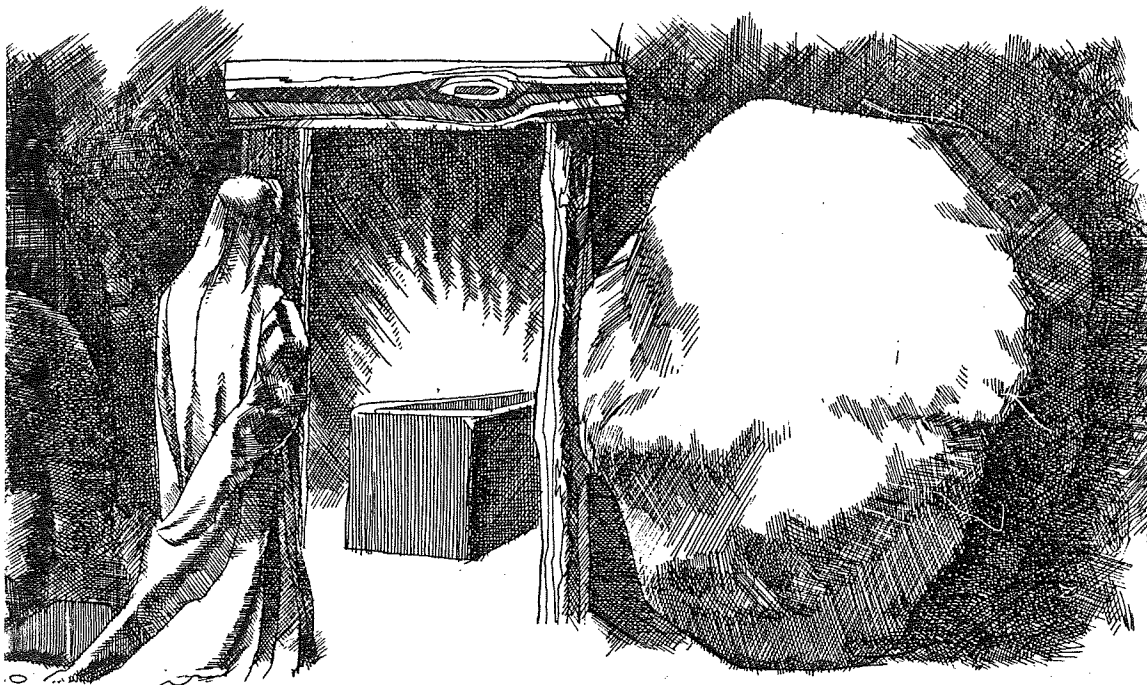
1. Christ did not descend into **hades** to suffer for sins, for His suffering for sin was completed on the cross.
2. The "preaching" of Christ to "the spirits in prison" does not preclude the possibility that these spirits heard the Gospel preached to them long after they had experienced physical death as a punishment upon their sins.
3. The spirits of Christians enter "paradise" and are "with Christ" at death, and do not descend into "hades." (This will be covered in detail in the last chapter.)

4. Cont'd)

B. Christ's resurrection took place on the third day after his death AND WAS WITNESSED BY MANY PERSONS. APPROXIMATELY TEN DIFFERENT RESURRECTION APPEARANCES ARE RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Matt. 28:16-18 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (NIV)

I Cor. 15:3-8 "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me." (Paul) (NRSV)



The Empty Tomb

God's Big Reversal

"...The apostles earliest proclamation could be summarized in the words, 'you killed him, but God raised him'. And in raising him, God reversed the verdict which had been passed on him... In other words, by raising Jesus, God was making a declaration about him, and in particular was turning all human opinions about him upside down. Condemned for blasphemy, he was now designated Son of God by the resurrection. Executed for sedition, for claiming to be a king, God made him 'both Lord and Christ'. Hanged on a tree under the curse of God, he was vindicated as the Saviour of sinners, the curse he bore being due to us and not to him." (1985:45)

– John R. W. Stott quoted by Timothy Dudley-Smith in *Authentic Christianity From the Writings of John Stott*, #107, p. 60, InterVarsity Press, 1995.
(Taken from *The Authentic Jesus*, p. 45. Downers Grove: IVP, 1985).

5. Christ's Ascension



"... as they were watching, He was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight."

(Acts 1:9 NRSV)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

1. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proves that He is, as He claimed, **the Son of God**, and that His words are utterly reliable (*Romans 1:4*).
2. The Resurrection is **the Father's strong vote of assent** upon the life and teachings of Jesus. It is the Father's "yes" to Jesus' claim to be the Son of God. It is the Father's "yes" to the forgiveness of mankind's sin because of the sacrificial death of His Son (*Acts 10:40-41*). Since "the wages of sin is death," and Jesus paid these "wages," the penalty of death, temporal and eternal, is now lifted from mankind, and those who accept Christ as their Savior will never experience death (*Romans 8*) as the dreaded punishment of sin in their mind and spirit (*John 5:24; 8:51-52*).
3. **Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of the resurrection of all mankind.** His resurrection is not just the restoration of the old, but the **beginning of a new kind of existence, and the beginning of a new creation by God of all things.** And Christ's resurrection is the pledge and guarantee of our own glorious resurrection (*I Cor. 15:20-23; Luke 20:35-36; Revelation 21, esp. v. 5*).
4. **Christ's resurrection** provides us with the strong assurance that **we worship a living and victorious Lord** who is with us and His church at all times (*Romans 8:11*).

Note: **The resurrection of mankind** will be discussed in the last chapter.

5. **On the fortieth day after his resurrection Jesus visibly ascended into heaven. In Heaven He is exalted AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, THE FATHER, AND RULES OVER ALL THINGS, ESPECIALLY THE CHURCH, AND will return in glory AT THE CLOSE OF THIS AGE.**

A. Christ Ascended into Heaven

Acts 1:6-11 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? **This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.**" (NRSV)

5. (Cont'd)

B. Before Christ ascended into heaven, he assigned a great task to the church through the apostles. *THIS GREAT TASK OF THE CHURCH WE CALL THE GREAT COMMISSION. BRIEFLY STATED: WE ARE TO offer forgiveness of sins and eternal life TO ALL PEOPLE IF THEY WILL REPENT AND BELIEVE IN JESUS. WE INVITE THEM TO BAPTISM AND OFFER THEM the promised Holy Spirit. WE INVITE THEM TO LEARN CHRIST'S teachings, to follow Him in faithful discipleship.*

Matt. 28:16-20 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, **they worshiped him**; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**" (NRSV)

See also: *Mark 16:14-17; Luke 24:45-48; John 20:31*

C. Christ was exalted and rules at the right hand of God

Acts 2:32-33a, 36 (Peter speaking) This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God...let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah (Christ), this Jesus whom you crucified. (NRSV)

I Cor. 15:24-26 Then comes the end, when he (Jesus) hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. (NRSV)

Eph. 1:20-23 God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body... (NRSV)

Heb. 2:7-9 "You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (NIV)

See also: *Colossians 1:19-20; Colossians 3:1*

5. (Cont'd)

D. Jesus intercedes for those who draw near in His name

Heb. 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For **we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses**, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. **Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence**, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (NIV)

Rev. 3:19 “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.” (NIV)

E. What Shall I Do With Jesus? (Continued on next page)

Phil. 3:7-11 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, **I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.** For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order **that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (NRSV)

Our Response to Jesus

We cannot deal with Jesus at a distance, impersonally. We are not the judge or the jury “examining” Jesus Who is on the witness stand. Christianity is not merely a religious philosophy, it is a personal relationship with God. Faith has ‘dealings’ with God; it ‘wagers’ on God. A married man cannot just decide on his way home to buy a new Corvette without talking it over first with his wife. So also true Christians always first look to God for guidance and to determine His will before they act. God is the Initiator in this relationship. He makes the proposal and we must answer, ‘yes,’ or ‘no’ to our Heavenly Suitor. And this is not a one-time thing, it is a daily looking to God, a daily listening to His word, a daily rendering to Him of the sincere, undivided trust, devotion and obedience of our hearts.

1. **If Jesus is a SHEPHERD** (*John 10*), then I must listen to His voice, allow Him to determine my path, and follow Him.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish...” (*John 10:27-28*)

2. **If Jesus is a KING** (*John 18*), then my will must bow in submission before Him; to deny Him is treason; refusal to heed His Word is defiance; and disobedience is rebellion against His rule.

(Pilate to Jesus) “You Are A King Then!” (*John 18:37a*)

(Jesus to Pilate) “My kingship is not of this world...” “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.” (*John 18:36-37b*)

3. **If Jesus is a Savior** (*John 3*), then I must entrust my whole person to His care and allow Him to Rescue and Save me.

“‘No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.’ For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (*John 3:13-16*)

4. **If Jesus LOVES ME** enough to die the death that I deserved (*II Cor. 5:21*) then I must offer Him the love and devotion of my heart, and the service of my life.

“For our sake he (God) made him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (*II Cor. 5:21*) “And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (*II Cor. 5:15*)

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (*I John 3:16*)

5. **If Jesus is a TEACHER SENT FROM GOD** (*John 3:2*), then I must sit at His feet and humbly open my mind and heart to all He has to teach me, and I must prefer His thoughts to my own.

“And a voice came out of the cloud, saying. ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’” (*Luke 9:35*) (*Luke 10:38-42*)

6. **If Jesus GIVES ME ETERNAL LIFE** (*John 17*), then He shall have my undying love and devotion throughout all the ages of eternity.

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.’” (*John 17:1-3*)

Worksheet for Chapter VIII

1. On the basis of this lesson, can you answer the following questions?

1. Name three things from which Jesus has saved mankind.
2. Which three Old Testament offices (all involving anointing) are combined in Christ?
3. Give two different functions of a priest in the Old Testament times.
4. Describe how a person becomes a member of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.
5. How and when does the death of Christ on the Cross benefit an individual human being?
6. How can you show that Christ's descent into hell was not to suffer for sins?
7. What is the value of Christ's resurrection to us?
8. What does the Bible teach that Christ is **now doing** for the church and the world?
9. What is the **great commission** which Christ gave to his church before his Ascension?

2. All true believers in Christ are also **disciples of Christ**. The word "disciple" is used more than 250 times in the gospels and in the Book of Acts. It comes from a Greek word which means "learner" or "apprentice." **A Christian is one who learns from Christ and follows his teachings.** Below are passages in which Jesus taught the essential characteristics of true disciples. There is also one passage from the Book of Acts. Look up the passages and fill in the blanks.

1. "A disciple is not _____, nor a servant above his master: it is enough for the disciple to be _____." (Matt. 10:24-25)
2. "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully taught will _____." (Luke 6:40)
3. "...whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because _____, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose _____." (Matthew 10:42)
4. "If anyone comes to me and does not _____, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26)
5. "...if you _____, you are truly my disciples." (John 8:31)
6. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if _____." (John 13:35)
7. "By this my Father is glorified, that you _____, and so prove to be my disciples." (John 15:8)
8. "...in Antioch the disciples were _____." (Acts 11:26b)