

# “Behold Thy King”

by  
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## Christ in Humility

Jesus Christ was the express image of God. He could say while He was here upon earth, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And it certainly is true that He came to show us the Father.

It is important that men on earth should know the truth about God and that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ deals specifically with our personal relationship with God. In a general way all believers know that the gospel brings salvation to us, that through the gospel we can come to know the Lord and by putting our trust in Him we can be saved. This is true. Yet it is important to remember that the Lord Jesus Christ came to show us certain things about God that we should have in mind as we are turning to Him.

The Lord Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Obviously, then, it is important that we get to know the Lord Jesus, because to know Him is to be able to find our way into the very presence of God. He said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." And we are told that as we continue with Him, He will show us the truth and the truth will make us free. So it would seem that in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to this world He had a mission to perform. He was to show us the things of God and make manifest that life is only to be found in God.

Our salvation depends upon our *receiving* the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a passage of Scripture that says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" We sometimes sing a song that has this line in it, "There is life for a look at the crucified One, there is life at this moment for thee." You see, if Jesus Christ came only to give Himself up, if all that He did was to come to die, it would seem reasonable that He could have done that somewhere else. Couldn't He have done that in heaven? Was He not the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world? Well, if He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, why would He need to become incarnate?

Isn't it true that a great many people have the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ showed us the truth about God in taking care of the poor, the sick, the hurt and diseased? Certainly that is true. He did show us the things of God in the work that He performed. But let us not forget He showed us the things of God *in Himself*. The truth that we needed to see about Almighty God was demonstrated in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We could let our eyes follow Jesus of Nazareth, see Him in His work and in His ministry (which includes His death, His resurrection, His being in the presence of God and His coming again). The whole round of truth about the Lord Jesus Christ is, after all, the truth that we need to know that we might be saved. He not only died for us, but He did so openly for us to see.

The truth of the matter with reference to men is that the heart of the natural man is vain. We are self-centered and proud. We are inclined to be arrogant and conceited. Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And so, in the fulness of time "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." The Lord Jesus Christ came to die for sinners.

I want to bring to our attention the fact that the outstanding thing the Lord Jesus Christ did in this world was to deny Himself and to submit Himself to suffering. I want to review things about the Lord Jesus Christ so that we may see how uniformly in every way the Lord Jesus humbled Himself and took a low position so far as men are concerned.

For instance, consider the circumstances surrounding His birth. Now I know that the fact of the Virgin Birth is tremendous, and the glory of God that shone round about Him was wonderful. I realize that His coming was heralded by angels and was marked by other unusual things that happened. But at the same time His birth was almost pathetically humble. As a baby He was laid in a manger. You couldn't get into a situation much more poverty stricken than that.

There was plenty of proud show in that day and time. The government of Rome was impressive. The Jewish people themselves with their temples, their high priests and the formal ceremonial services were very impressive. And there were rich men in those days even as now. There would have been ample opportunity for the Lord Jesus to have been born in wealth, or surrounded by riches, or with control over many of the things of this world. And yet that wasn't what happened. He was born into a humble home and under very humble circumstances. Even Bethlehem was only a quiet little village up on a hillside of Judea. It didn't begin to compare with such cities as Rome, Athens or Alexandria.

Then take His youth. We know practically nothing about it unless we look at the one incident in Luke where we find that at twelve years of age He was taken into the temple. As a Jewish boy He was then at the age for examination concerning His enrollment as one of the members of the community. His mother came after Him and found Him talking with the learned doctors there. When His mother began to chide Him about that, He asked her, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Right after that we read (in Luke, Chapter Two) that He went down with His mother and Joseph and was subject unto them. Here again we have a quiet, yielded, ordinary, humble Life.

When you think of His manhood, recall how He Himself said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." This was meant to imply that He had no money. As far as this world was concerned, He actually was destitute.

Apparently He was not particularly striking in appearance. We draw that inference from the way the people treated Him. You will remember that when Judas came to betray Him he had to say, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he." That would indicate that there was nothing exceptional in the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, He looked like the others. In the book of Isaiah we read, "There is no beauty that we should desire him." So far as His personal conduct as a youth and as a young man was concerned, it was unimpressive to other people. I am quite satisfied that there would be an integrity and an honesty and a straightforwardness that in many, many cases would be hard to understand. But at the same time there was no great enthusiasm among the people who knew Him.

Now let's go on from there and consider His ministry. In Luke, Chapter Twenty-two, we read that there was strife among the disciples as to which should be accounted the greatest. He said unto them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." This was the character He maintained all the time He was in this world. When He stood before Pilate the governor, Pilate examined Him and asked Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Then the Lord Jesus said (in John 18:36), "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." This is the way in which He put it about Himself. And He did this in a quiet; yielded, humble fashion.

When we come to the matter of His triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem, in Matthew 21:5-11 we read, "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon." Then we read that the multitudes went before and they that followed cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." His coming into the city of Jerusalem in this fashion is called *the triumphal entry*. We feel that way about it because He did come to offer Himself, as it were, as King. And yet, although the people came out in a large company at that time to welcome Him, it really was a very small thing after all. There was no great big parade. All you have here is one man riding on a donkey, coming down the street

of the city. By the way, riding upon a donkey was a poor man's means of travel. He wasn't riding a prancing horse or riding in a chariot like a rich man would do.

In the crucifixion we again see how the Lord Jesus was humble. When He was being arrested Peter wanted to defend Him. He answered Peter, saying, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Everything the Lord Jesus did was in accordance with the Scripture. We find that the Lord Jesus came humbly in this fashion that He might be actually taken and put to death because He was fulfilling something that His Father wanted Him to do.

Isaiah 53:7 says, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." If you read the story of the crucifixion in the various passages you will see how He was abused by the soldiers, scorned by the priests, ignored by the people and mocked in His misery. And He accepted all that in a meek way without any retaliation whatever. He let these people think as they would. And His burial, as you know, was in a borrowed tomb. And so He left us an example, suffering for us and bearing our sins in His own body. The Apostle Paul discusses this in Philippians 2:5-11.

The whole emphasis of the life of the Lord Jesus was on the opportunity that exists for anybody and everybody to come to God. We have gloried from time to time in saying that at the foot of the cross the ground is level. Anybody can come to the cross of Calvary. We say, "Whosoever will, let him come," and "Whosoever cometh will in no wise be cast out."

When we're thinking about the King in His humility this is the way God feels so far as our life in this world is concerned: we should humble ourselves and yield ourselves unto death. In the Gospel of John 21:18-19 the Lord Jesus told Peter that as he grew in grace and in knowledge, and came nearer and nearer to being what the Lord Jesus wanted him to be, he would yield himself to the suffering of the flesh. In this way, Peter would be used to honor and glorify God. This is the way of the cross, and "the way of the cross leads home." So far as you and I are concerned, let's remember one thing: "The servant is not greater than his master." It will happen to us, too.

## Christ in Triumph

"But God raised him from the dead" (Acts 13:30). This is God's triumphant answer to all the malice of Satan and all the scorn of men. When we look at the shameful cross we see what man can and will do. But when we look at the empty tomb this is what God will do.

Throughout the week preceding Easter our hearts are heavy as we remember the suffering of Christ. This sweet and gentle person, who did no one any harm and yet who suffered so cruelly at the hands of wicked men, endured all this for us. But on Easter, the day on which we remember that the Lord rose from the dead, we rejoice in the power of God that can and will raise the dead. All men suffer; and because the suffering of man is all around for us to see on every hand, we are moved in sympathy at the suffering of Jesus Christ. And because we Christians too shall rise with Him, our hearts are thrilled to hear that "He is not here: for he is risen." Somehow the suffering is not so great when we remember the glory that is to follow. The gospel of this lowly Jesus, so tender and mild, arouses sweet appreciation of Him, but the glad tidings of the open grave fill our hearts with joyous praise as we rejoice in the "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The rejection of Jesus Christ by His own people was a scandal. Even unbelievers are shocked by it. "He came unto his own, and his own received Him not." All over the world this would be recognized as a sorrow and a tragedy. But the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead opens the heart and mind to new things in a marvelous way. We understand that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "The ways of God are past finding out." It's hard for us to know why God does things the way He does. When we think of the Lord Jesus Christ dying for us, so humble, so meek, I suspect many times we might have wished that He could have just done something impressive. If He had somehow only exercised His power over men in a way that we could understand. But, instead, He was always so ready to suffer and so quiet about it; "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." "When he was reviled, [he] reviled not again."

Then we see the Lord rising from the dead, above all in glory and majesty and power. It's an entirely different picture. It is as if God had allowed man and Satan to do as they would, even to crucifying the Lord. The full power of Satan's ill-will and evil intent was allowed to come to the fullest in destroying the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Then God acted in power to bring His will to pass. And when God begins to act, His first action is to raise the dead.

The amazing thing about this is that God does not confront the forces of evil in a direct conflict. They seem to have their way. They seem to go on until they have completely dominated, even to doing to death everything that is. But God can raise the dead and the victory belongs to Him. After Satan has shot his arrow and it has spent of all its energy and fallen to the ground, then God begins to work.

The skeptical person can be tempted to think that this is a case of God not meeting the issue, that God is allowing the other person to go on as if He couldn't stop him. This thought is very short sighted. The game isn't over when a man dies. That's not the last inning. Man has yet to come face to face with his Creator. God has the last word, and God's last word is that the dead shall rise again.

Christ Jesus had promised that He would rise from the dead. He had told His disciples that, after they took His body and put it to death, on the third day He would be raised from the dead. And so it came to pass, the resurrection proved that Jesus of Nazareth, even while He was here talking about these things, actually was the Son of God. He knew what He was talking about. And now this same Christ Jesus also has promised that He will raise up from the dead all who believe in Him, and who is going to deny Him that? He said if they took His body and destroyed it, He would raise it in three days. And He said that whosoever believeth in Him should never perish but have everlasting life. They did take His body and

destroyed it and He did raise it from the dead in three days. Who then is going to say that He will not carry out His promise to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by Him? Christ Jesus has promised that He would bring from the dead all those who put their trust in Him. And the resurrection of His own body was a proof of how God would do this and how God would regenerate all who believe.

In I Corinthians, Chapter Fifteen, we find a full discussion of this whole matter. Notice how Paul argued that the resurrection of the body is very much like the growing of wheat. We read in verse 37, "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." He is saying that you put the grain of wheat into the ground and it must die that the new plant may grow out of it. You remember in John, Chapter Twelve, the Lord Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Paul went on to say that the new plant doesn't look like the grain of wheat, but it comes out of it. Our bodies, our own human natures, are like that grain of wheat put into the soil. And when we are put into the grave, then we are to be raised from the dead. And that new stock of wheat cannot grow out unless the old grain dies.

This is not only a demonstration of how God will regenerate all who believe, but this is also a demonstration of how God will deliver from sin. We find this as we turn in the book of Romans to Chapter Six, verses 4 through 11: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. [We believe into Him in His death, yielding ourselves in the same way to die in Him, that we might be raised from the dead in Him as He was raised from the dead]: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him . . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body."

The flesh, our old human nature, is the area in which sin is lodged. When we reckon our human nature to be dead as if in the grave, the believer is raised into newness of life. Our sin belongs to the carnal nature. We take it to be dead that the new life we have in Christ may take over. That is the life that is minded to obey the Lord God. In Romans, Chapter Eight, verse 11, we see that this is actually what will take place by the power of God: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

The resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ was actual and real. Let me mention that to you again. Regardless of whether or not a person is yielded to Christ, these are facts that can be understood, *must* be understood. The tomb was empty. No one doubted this even back in those days. The soldiers said that somebody came and stole His body away despite the fact that they were paid to guard the tomb. There was no doubt that His body was gone. Even the unbelieving Romans admitted that His body was not there. In the second place, you will remember in the record that the angels were present to announce, "He is risen." There is no question about that record. Someone will say some people don't believe that. That doesn't prove a thing. There are some people who don't believe anything. There is nothing in the Bible that somebody will not doubt. There were people that saw the Lord Jesus Christ and didn't believe in Him. Don't be impressed by the fact that some people don't believe. Some people can't see. That doesn't change the color of the rose.

Our Lord's body was made of different "stuff" after He was raised from the dead. It was made of spiritual "stuff." You will see this in I Corinthians 15:40-44. I wish you would read that. Then you might remember that after His resurrection He appeared and disappeared at will. He would come into a room

that was locked and He could disappear from it while He was talking. And it was in that resurrection body that He ascended into heaven in full view of them all.

Now I stress that for this reason: if you have in your heart and mind the memory of some loved one who has gone and you're looking forward to the matter of the resurrection, you may remember what they looked like the last few days while they were alive in this world. Perhaps their features were changed; maybe on account of sickness their whole appearance was changed. Now when you're thinking about the resurrection from the dead, you're not going to think of them in that sickened look that they had just when they died. It may be that there is someone reading this who has lost an arm or a leg or has otherwise been crippled. You can be sure of one thing; when you are raised from the dead you won't be a cripple. The one-armed man won't be a one-armed man. The person who is blind now won't be blind then. "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

My reason for emphasizing that His body which was raised from the dead was made of spiritual stuff is important, because that's the way it will be with us. It is a real body. You remember they handled it. And He took fish and ate it in front of them. This is the body that was taken into heaven. He is alive in that body now, and He is bringing it with Him when He comes. The return of the Lord Jesus will be "in like manner as ye have seen him go." This is the great truth of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our King. Jesus is alive. This can be a matter of real comfort to everyone who is in any kind of sorrow, grief or trouble.

There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. For the just this will be a matter of joyful hope; for the unjust it will be a matter of fearful dread. But this is the truth; this world is not everything. You're not through when you're through down here. You're just moving along into the presence of God. There shall be a resurrection of the dead. And there shall be reunion with Him. The believer will meet his Savior. It will be like the bride meeting the bridegroom, and there will be great joy when we are united with Him. There shall be a reunion with loved ones. We are not to sorrow as others which have no hope. For if Jesus died and rose again, even so will God bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. There is a possibility of living in this world in this power of God, in this newness of life, set free from the sin and the old nature. Paul had it as his ambition in the course of his whole lifetime that he might come to "know him, and the power of his resurrection."

Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the power of God. Today we rejoice in it and we tell the whole wide world – "Up from the grave He arose, in a mighty triumph o'er His foes."

## Christ in Witness

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (I Timothy 1:17). Thus did the Apostle Paul refer to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The word *king* is not so meaningful among us in our culture, and yet over the world it is universally used to denote ,the ruler, the principal person in the whole group. And there is more involved than his prestige. The word *king* refers to what he does. It is a functional term, because it refers to the function that He has. And when we speak of the Lord Jesus as King, we are referring primarily to His function as the one who is the Lord, the leader, the director of the people.

Part of our distress in this life is due to confusion, to conflict, and to disorder. We're so often going both north and south, both east and west, and round and round, and up and down. For many of us it would be a wonderful relief to have some order introduced, to have some harmony among all the different interests that we have. Or perhaps to establish some value as to relative importance: this is most important, this is next, and this is next, and this is least – that kind of thing. And this is what the word *king* brings to our minds. The king is the one who is in control of all that is under his care.

The covenant with David in the Old Testament promised that the throne of David would be established forever. On the throne would be the seed of David. This promised King is the Christ, the One who is anointed of God. This is how we think of the Lord Jesus Christ as being the "King of kings and Lord of lords."

When we try to understand this word *king*, when we speak about the king's court or the king's people, we think of something ostentatious or majestic. We think of it as a grand display. The idea of the crown jewels is common around the world. Even the Lord Jesus spoke about the glory of Solomon.

But when we come to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself all of this needs to be rethought. We've got to look at it from the Bible point of view. It will be an entirely different thing from what we would commonly expect. The Lord Jesus said, "I am among you as he that serveth." He was the King of kings, but He was amongst us as One that serveth. This does not mean that the Lord Jesus stepped out of His place as King. This simply means in the truth of God that the king is the servant. This is not to say that serving men or serving the world will make you a king. But it does mean that serving God will make you a king.

It's hard for us to accept the humility of Christ in view of His great majesty. While He was here upon earth as Jesus of Nazareth, do you realize that He would have appeared like a very ordinary person? And here's my evidence: the little children came to Him. Now they wouldn't come to a person who was putting on an act. They wouldn't come to a person who was very, very showy. They wouldn't come to a person who was putting on any big display of power. Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven demons, came to Him. She washed His feet with her tears and kissed them when she anointed them with the perfume. She could feel very close to Him. At the last supper do you remember how John was leaning on His breast? That would be very much like putting your arm on His shoulder and resting on His shoulder. Do you understand that, so far as the Lord Jesus Christ is concerned, He can be that close to you? Is there anybody you count as a good friend? Do you have someone in mind as your best friend? Well let me suggest to you that the Lord Jesus would be closer to you than your best friend, more understanding of your ways than your best friend. Keep that in mind.

The Lord Jesus speaks to us in our hearts. He doesn't speak with any bombast. He doesn't speak with any great, high, loud tones. He speaks person to person, softly and gently and kindly into our souls. Not so much to show us what to do or how to do, but to incline our hearts to walk with Him. Showing us what to do and how to do it is like showing us the law and expecting us to achieve certain works. But telling us of the love of God, calling us to put our trust in Him – "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are



heavy laden, and I will give you rest" – this is the gospel. This is the call of God to you to come and yield to Him, and He will give you an inward guidance. You can live your life trusting in Him, believing in Him. He does not guide you by defining the outward acts, the overt acts that you are to perform. But He does so by impelling you from within. That's why the Apostle Paul could say, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

When we speak about the Lord Jesus Christ being in us as King, in His witnessing and in our witnessing, we don't need to think that we are going to see some big display. But we can have in mind that we'll be inwardly led. He wants to speak to the whole world through believers.

We see this in the book of the Acts. There we do not see His face. We see His people. We see His church, and He is now in His church and moving through them. For instance, when Peter got up and preached on the day of Pentecost and some 3,000 people believed, we could make a big mistake if we start praising Peter. Actually the Holy Spirit had come upon them, and the Lord Jesus Christ was working in them. The Lord Himself by the Holy Spirit inwardly guided Peter and enabled Peter to preach what he ought to preach. When Peter and John were at the Beautiful Gate and the lame man was healed, the crowd came together looking on Peter and John. Peter answered them, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we have made this man to walk?" Then he went ahead and told them that the reason the man was healed was because the Lord Jesus Himself was working through them. He is the living King, ordering the lives of His people and through them accomplishing His tasks. Note that this work is not especially to heal crippled people, but is to call all men unto Him and to bring help to suffering men in the world that they might come and find their peace in Him.

So when Peter and John were brought before the Council, they were given a very serious, threatening command. They were not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, and if they did preach any more in this name, they would be beaten. Long before, as recorded in Matthew 10:16-20, the Lord Jesus said that they would be brought into the courts of kings and of princes and they would be falsely accused. But, He continued, they were not to be concerned about how they were going to answer. It would be given them in that hour what they should say. Even then the Lord Jesus anticipated what came afterward by saying, "It is . . . the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Now the people were impressed with Peter and John. "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." I am sure a good many people could go out and praise Peter and John. If you and I aren't careful when we talk about either Peter or John we might go back to that and point out what great men they were. That would all be misleading. It isn't that these were great men. It was the Lord in them that was great. Their steadfast testimony which they gave in such faithfulness was due to the grace of the living Lord who was in them.

After the Council had warned them never to preach any more and had threatened them with further punishment if they would preach, these disciples went back to the early church and told the whole company of believers about it. What did they do? We find that they all banded together for prayer and prayed to Almighty God to strengthen them to be true in that hour of trial. Here again, don't look at those people to find reason to praise them. Look up in the face of the Lord. This was the Spirit of the living Lord in these people that moved them to the same kind of steadfastness that the Lord manifested while He was here upon earth.

After that the church took note among themselves of any who were short of goods. And they sold surplus goods and gave to the poor among them so that nobody lacked anything. If we're not careful we'll say that those early Christians were generous. I'd like to say those early Christians acted generously. What they did was generous, but you and I should know that what they did was not their own doing. They were being led to do that. We see the King ordering the lives of His people. The result was wonderful, gracious and grand, but we should be wise enough to give God the glory for this sort of thing.

Later on there arose trouble because it looked as if some people were not getting their fair share of

the distribution of food. Certain persons complained. The apostles called the church together and told the church that they should elect seven deacons. The apostles would turn over the administration of the food situation to seven good men whom the church would select. As it actually turned out this was wonderful; it worked out just exactly that way. Are we going to give Peter credit for being that wise? Are we going to say that all of a sudden Peter had exceptional wisdom, so to speak? Or are we going to think that Peter was led? If we understand that this was the Lord Jesus continuing to work and to do of His good pleasure, this will help a great deal. It was the Lord's leading that led the apostles so wisely and humbly.

When the people reacted against Stephen and stoned him to death, you will remember that he looked up and saw "the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." They stoned him to death, but we read that he "cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And, "he fell asleep," asleep in, the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast, right in the midst of all that stoning. The King, the Almighty King of kings and Lord of lords, was right there taking care of His servant.

So we could go down through all the book of the Acts, step by step, and on into the Epistles and see all the way along among God's people that the Lord in the heart speaks peace. He speaks pity for those who are unfortunate. He speaks purpose so far as our lives are concerned. And His voice in us has power as we yield to Him.

## Christ in Glory

"Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). The heavens are true and real right now. You and I don't see them, but they're there. And the Son of man is standing on the right hand of God.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth He was the Son of God incarnate in the fashion of a man. He was made in the likeness of man as a deliberate maneuver to rescue us. It was the only way to get us out. It's as though in traveling I slid off the highway and my car is stuck in the mud, right down to the axle. There's no chance for me to get back on the main road. Someone comes along with a tow car and is going to help me out. There's one thing he has got to do. Before he can help me out he's got to attach himself to me down there in the mud. The only way he can do that is to get himself muddy. He must take that cable and get down into the mud and fasten onto my car before he can pull me up. The Lord Jesus took upon Himself the nature of man and came right down to the cross at Calvary. In a sense He came right down into the mud in order to deliver me.

What I want to bring to our minds in this study is that you and I should be very careful we do not misunderstand and think that because the man got down there into the mud with my car that he's a muddy man. Just because he went down there and got all muddy taking my car out of the ditch, don't say that's the way he lives and don't call him that kind of a person. You see, the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to seek and to save the lost. He came as the Son of God into this world. As Paul wrote in the book of Philippians, He deliberately set aside His glory in order to come for us; He emptied Himself and "made Himself of no reputation." In Chapter Seventeen of John He prayed, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He had his glory, but He emptied Himself of it. He took on Him the form of man and came down here to help us.

Years ago, my father-in-law said something to me that I feel I want to share with you. He was a little afraid that I might be influenced by the tendency that was even then amongst us Christian people to over-emphasize the humanity of Jesus Christ. My father-in-law said, "If you should see a bank president watching a new office boy handle the wastebaskets, and this boy is awkward and actually making a mess in trying to empty the wastebaskets, and if the banker gets up from his desk and goes over and takes the wastebasket and empties it for the boy, you would make a big mistake if you thought the bank president was an office boy."

My father-in-law had another illustration very similar to that. He said, "Suppose that the banker comes along the hall and a poor scrub woman, who is just earning a mere pittance of money because she is an unskilled laborer, is carrying her pail and her mop along the hall. She comes to a spot where she is just physically not able to do what she wants to do. It's possible, if he were the right kind of man, that he'd go over and handle that bucket for her. He might even pick it up and set it on a bench. He might pick up the mop that has fallen on the floor and set it in its place. And so you would see the bank president picking up this scrub woman's pail and the scrub woman's mop. He might even use the mop and show the woman how to do it so that she can get it done well. If you were to see him do that," my father-in-law said to me, "you'd make a big mistake, if you thought the bank president was a scrub woman. Why not appreciate the fact that you have a very unusual bank president who is willing to do this?" And from that he emphasized to me that just because the Lord Jesus Christ came down to our size in this world and was willing to take on the flesh that we have in order to save us, don't limit Him. He isn't like us. He's the son of God who came and took on this human form in order that He might help us.

During His earthly career I think He got tired like we get tired, hungry like we get hungry, sleepy like we get sleepy, thirsty like we get thirsty. His appearance was the same as ours – except for the time

when He went up on the Mount of Transfiguration, in the presence of Peter, James and John. He was transfigured then. His face became brighter shining than the noonday sun, and his clothing was glistening white, whiter than any fuller's soap could make it. As you think of this, be sure to keep in mind that on the Mount of Transfiguration the Lord Jesus did not assume a character. He didn't make Himself look like something He wasn't. Actually He pulled the veil aside and revealed what He was all the time. But for us He covered His glory in such a way that little children could come to Him easily. Sinners loved to hear Him. The fallen woman came and worshipped Him. The common people heard Him gladly. And yet the Bible goes on with the story and tells us that after His resurrection "God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ."

Today, if you were to hear people talking about Him as if He were a carpenter, they are out of date. You can be kind to them in your heart and mind, but they're not up to the situation. That might have been said while He was here incarnate, but since then He's been glorified. That means to say that right now He is in glory. His body doesn't look the same as it did when He was here, and He is not in the same situation as when He was here. Stephen saw Him in His glory, standing at the right hand of God. You will remember that that had a profound effect upon Stephen. I drew your attention to it. His face was as the face of an angel. Saul saw Him on the Damascus road and he saw Him in a light that was brighter than the noonday sun. Remember how it affected Saul? He fell on his face, blinded. When he got up to walk away, people had to lead him by the hand. He couldn't see anything. John saw Him, as we read in the book of Revelation. There on the Isle of Patmos he saw the living Lord and he fell at His feet as one dead.

There are many sentimental songs that have been prepared and sung about the Lord Jesus Christ as if you could sort of pal around with the Lord Jesus Christ and talk with Him the way you would get along with some buddy of yours at the present time. They can be very misleading. I sometimes hear people saying they just wish the Lord Jesus Christ would appear now. Do you know what you are saying? Do you realize if the Lord Jesus Christ were to appear right there where you are that you would probably be stricken blind? Do you know that He is moving in a light that is brighter than the noonday sun? People who emphasize walking in His steps are not thinking very clearly. They are making up a little story of their own; and because their intentions are good, I am sure that they will be forgiven. I may not know much, but from my reading of the Bible I know there's no man living who can walk in the steps of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is God.

But you will say to me that it is written in I Peter 2:21, "Ye should follow his steps." Yes, in the days of His incarnation you could walk in His steps. But He would take you on just one walk and Peter tells you what that walk is. It's a short walk. That's from where you are to self crucifixion. That's what you can do. You can imitate Him there. After that, He walks in you. You don't follow Him. You yield to Him. You don't try and do what He says. You yield to do as He leads. Half the time you don't know what He is doing. You just do as you feel led to do in the Lord. There is only one way now in which you and I can have this sort of relationship with Him. Colossians 1:27 speaks of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." That is the case. The Lord Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, is given to be in you.

The book in the Bible that tells us about the present activity of the Lord Jesus Christ is the book of Revelation. The book of Hebrews does say that He is the high priest in heaven interceding on our behalf. This is true. But, generally speaking, the place where we find out about the Lord Jesus now is the book of Revelation. In the first chapter we find the vision that John had where he saw that Christ Jesus in glory was in the midst of the churches. And He was there with an eye on the churches to appraise their conduct, to evaluate them. If you read through Chapters Two and Three of the book of Revelation, you will see how Christ feels about the churches. Incidentally, we have prepared a booklet about that, and if you haven't received it you could receive it if you wrote to us. Ask for *What Christ Thinks of the Church*.

He is the Judge of the Christian congregations. In connection with the church at Ephesus He pointed out that they were a good and a strong church and in many ways they pleased Him. But He had

one thing against them. They had left their first love. He told them to repent or else He would remove their candlesticks from its place, which is to say He would take away their witnessing opportunity if they did not return to their first love, the Lord Jesus Christ. The next message was to the church at Pergamos. He saw it was a good church, a big church, a strong church, a church that was willing to endure. There was one thing that He didn't like. They tolerated error. They allowed people to continue among them who were teaching things that weren't true. He didn't like it.

Then there was the church at Smyrna. They were having tribulation. The Lord Jesus didn't give them any criticism, but He gave them assurance that He knew about their tribulations. He would be with them. He gave them encouragement to be steadfast. The church at Thyatira was the busy church. They did so much. They were all the time working and doing. And the Lord Jesus appreciated everything that they were doing. But He said you've got something there that I want to point out. You're tolerating a person who is teaching falsehood. They were tolerating a woman by the name of Jezebel, a certain person who was spreading around in the congregation ideas that were not true, intimating to people that they could have the blessing of God with something less of commitment than what they had been taught to believe. This kind of thing was evil and the Lord Jesus told them to put it away or else they would suffer judgment accordingly. Then we come to the church at Sardis. That's an interesting thing because it has this very familiar ring to our ears, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." This church at Sardis was told to strengthen the things that remain because they were so dormant, actually dead so far as the Lord Jesus Christ was concerned. Then we come to the church at Philadelphia. It was a small church, but they had kept the faith. They had kept the Word. The Lord spoke well of them and told them He would be with them.

Finally we read about the church at Laodicea, and all of us get so uneasy at this point. The church at Laodicea was rich and apparently strong, big and powerful, but lukewarm, having no real zeal. The hardest thing the Lord Jesus said about any of the churches He said about that one. He said that He would have to spue them out of His mouth if they didn't change this casual, indifferent, neutral attitude. But at the same time He gave them perhaps the greatest promise that there is. And here again we take this to heart. This is what the Lord Jesus today will say. He is the King in glory, but despite this fact, He can say, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The living Lord Jesus Christ wants to help.

In everyone of these churches that the Lord Jesus examined He gave a promise. He will be with the overcomer everywhere. Every one of these churches will have some people that will overcome.

When we go on in the book of Revelation we find the Lord Jesus is standing by the throne, receiving the worship, the adoration and praise of all heaven. He will engage in war with the forces of evil and He will defeat this evil. After that He will reign in peace, in joy and in glory forever. And the redeemed will share in that glory as His bride. These are the wonderful things that the Bible points to with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ in glory who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.