



Then Jesus Came

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Forward

Then Jesus Came

By Oswald J. Smith

One sat alone beside the highway begging
His eyes were blind, the Light he could not see
He clutched his rags and shivered in the shadows
Then Jesus came and bid the darkness flee

Chorus

When Jesus comes the tempter's power is broken
When Jesus comes; all tears are wiped away
He takes the gloom and fills my heart with glory
For all is changed when Jesus comes to stay.

"Unclean! Unclean!" the leper cried in torment,
The deaf, the dumb, in helplessness stood near;
The fever raged, disease had gripped its victim
Then Jesus came and cast out ev'ry fear.

From home and friends the evil spirits drove him,
Among the tombs he dwelt in misery;
He cut himself as demon pow'rs possessed him,
Then Jesus came, and set the captive free.

So men today have found the Saviour able,
They could not conquer passion, lust and sin;
Their broken hearts had left them sad and lonely,
Then Jesus came and dwelt, Himself, within.

Chapter 1

Why Jesus Came:

Jesus came to do the will of the Father

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” John 6:38

Jesus did not work independently of God the Father, but in union with him. This should give us even more assurance of being welcomed into God’s presence and being protected by him. Jesus’ purpose was to do the will of God, not to satisfy Jesus’ human desires. When we follow Jesus, we should have the same purpose.

Jesus came to do the will of the Father

“Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’” Hebrews 10:7

This quotation is not cited in any other New Testament book. However, it is a central teaching of the Old Testament that God desires obedience and a right heart, not empty compliance to the sacrifice system (see the chart in Hosea 6:6).

The writer of Hebrews applies to Christ the words of the psalmist in Psalm 40:6-8. Christ came to offer his body on the cross for us as a sacrifice that is completely acceptable to God. God’s new and living way for us to please him is not by keeping laws or even by abstaining from sin.

It is by coming to him in faith to be forgiven, and then following him in loving obedience.

The costly sacrifice of an animal’s life impressed upon the sinner the seriousness of his or her own sin before God. Because Jesus shed his own blood for us, his sacrifice is infinitely greater than any Old Testament offering. Considering the immeasurable gift he gave us, we should respond by giving him our devotion and service.

Setting aside the first system in order to establish a far better one meant doing away with the system of sacrifices contained in the ceremonial law. It didn't mean eliminating God's *moral* law (the Ten Commandments).

The ceremonial law prepared people for Christ's coming. With Christ's death and resurrection, that system was no longer needed. And through Christ we can fulfill the moral law as we let him live in us

Jesus came to save Sinners

“The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” 1 Timothy 1:15

We may feel that our faith in God and our love for Christ and for others is inadequate. But we can be confident that Christ will help our faith and love grow as our relationship with him deepens.

Here Paul summarizes the Good News: Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and no sinner is beyond his saving power. (See Luke 5:32 for Jesus' purpose for being on earth.) Jesus didn't come merely to show us how to live a better life or to challenge us to be better people. He came to offer us salvation that leads to eternal life. Have you accepted his offer?

Paul calls himself “the worst” of sinners. We think of Paul as a great hero of the faith, but Paul never saw himself that way, because he remembered his life before he met Christ. The more Paul understood God's grace, the more he was aware of his own sinfulness. Humility and gratitude should mark the life of every Christian. Never forget that you too are a sinner saved by grace.

“For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Hebrews 9:26

All people die physically, but Christ died so that we would not have to die spiritually. We can have wonderful confidence in his saving work for us, doing away with sin—past, present, and future. He has forgiven our past sin—when he died on the cross, he sacrificed himself once for all (Hebrews 9:26); he has given us the Holy Spirit to help us deal with present sin; he appears for us now in heaven as our high priest (Hebrews 9:24); and he promises to return (Hebrews 9:28) and raise us to eternal life in a world where sin will be banished.

The “end of the ages” refers to the time of Christ’s coming to earth in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Christ ushered in the new era of grace and forgiveness. We are still living in the “end of the ages.” The day of the Lord has begun and will be completed at Christ’s return

Jesus came to bring Light to a Dark World

“I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.” John 12:46

We often wonder what God is like. How can we know the Creator when he doesn’t make himself visible? Jesus said plainly that those who see him see God, because he *is* God. If you want to know what God is like, study the person and words of Jesus Christ.

“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.” John 15:22

Christians will get plenty of hatred from the world; from each other we need love and support. Do you allow small problems to get in the way of loving other believers? Jesus commands that you love them, and he will give you the strength to do it.

Jesus came to be made like his people

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:14-17

Jesus had to become human (“flesh and blood”) so that he could die and rise again, in order to destroy the devil’s power over death (Romans 6:5-11). Only then could Christ deliver those who had lived in constant fear of death, and free them to live for him. When we belong to God, we need not fear death, because we know that death is only the doorway into eternal life (1 Cor. 15).

Christ’s death and resurrection set us free from the fear of death because death has been defeated. Every person must die, but death is not the end; instead, it is the doorway to a new life. All who dread death should have the opportunity to know the hope that Christ’s victory brings. How can you share this truth with those close to you?

Jesus came to Bear Witness to the Truth

“Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”” John 18:37

Pilate asked Jesus a straightforward question, and Jesus answered clearly. Jesus is a king, but one whose kingdom is not of this world. There seems to have been no question in Pilate’s mind that Jesus spoke the truth and was innocent of any crime. It also seems apparent that while recognizing the truth, Pilate chose to reject it. It is a tragedy when we fail to recognize the truth. It is a greater tragedy when we recognize the truth but fail to heed it.

Jesus came to destroy the Devil and His Works

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil...”Hebrews 2:14

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Those who make a practice of sin are of the devil.

“Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

We all have areas where temptation is strong and habits are hard to conquer.

These weaknesses give the devil a foothold, so we must deal with our areas of vulnerability. If we are struggling with a particular sin, however, these verses are not directed at us, even if for the time we seem to keep on sinning.

John is not talking about people whose victories are still incomplete; he is talking about people who make a practice of sinning and look for ways to justify it.

Three steps are necessary to find victory over prevailing sin:

- (1) Seek the power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word;
- (2) Stay away from tempting situations; and
- (3) Seek the help of the body of Christ—be open to their willingness to hold you accountable and to pray for you.

Jesus came to give Eternal Life

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” John 6:51

How can Jesus give us his flesh as bread to eat? To eat living bread means to accept Christ into our lives and become united with him.

We are united with Christ in two ways:

- (1) By believing in his death (the sacrifice of his flesh) and resurrection and
- (2) By devoting ourselves to living as he requires, depending on his teaching for guidance and trusting in the Holy Spirit for power.

Chapter 2

Jesus came to Receive Worship

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” Matthew 2:1-2, 11

Bethlehem is a small town five miles south of Jerusalem. It sits on a high ridge over 2,000 feet above sea level. It is mentioned in more detail in the Gospel of Luke. Luke also explains why Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem when Jesus was born, rather than in Nazareth, their hometown.

The land of Israel was divided into four political districts and several lesser territories. Judea was to the south, Samaria in the middle, Galilee to the north, and Idumea to the southeast. Bethlehem of Judea (also called Judah, Matthew 2:6) had been prophesied as the Messiah’s birthplace (Micah 5:2).

Jerusalem was also in Judea and was the seat of government for Herod the Great, king over all four political districts. After Herod’s death, the districts were divided among three separate rulers (see the note on +Matthew 2:19-22).

Although he was a ruthless, evil man who murdered many in his own family, Herod the Great supervised the renovation of the temple, making it much larger and more beautiful. This made him popular with many Jews. Jesus would visit Jerusalem many times because the great Jewish festivals were held there.

Not much is known about these Magi (traditionally called wise men). We don’t know where they came from or how many there were. Tradition says they were men of high position from Parthia, near the site of ancient Babylon.

How did they know that the star represented the Messiah?

- (1) They could have been Jews who remained in Babylon after the exile and knew the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah's coming.
- (2) They may have been eastern astrologers who studied ancient manuscripts from around the world. Because of the Jewish exile centuries earlier, they would have had copies of the Old Testament in their land.
- (3) They may have had a special message from God directing them to the Messiah.

Jesus came to Bring Great Joy

“And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” Luke 2:10

The greatest event in history had just happened! The Messiah had been born! For ages the Jews had waited for this, and when it finally occurred, the announcement came to humble shepherds. The good news about Jesus is that he comes to all, including the plain and the ordinary. He comes to anyone with a heart humble enough to accept him. Whoever you are, whatever you do, you can have Jesus in your life. Don't think you need extraordinary qualifications—he accepts you as you are.

Jesus came to Demonstrate True Humility

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:5-8

These verses are probably from a hymn sung by the early Christian church. The passage holds many parallels to the prophecy of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53.

As a hymn, it was not meant to be a complete statement about the nature and work of Christ. Several key characteristics of Jesus Christ, however, are praised in this passage:

- (1) Christ has always existed with God;
- (2) Christ is equal to God because he *is* God (John 1:1ff; Col. 1:15-19);
- (3) Though Christ is God, he became a man in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation for all people;
- (4) Christ did not just have the appearance of being a man—he actually became human to identify with our sins;
- (5) Christ voluntarily laid aside his divine rights and privileges out of love for his Father;
- (6) Christ died on the cross for our sins so we wouldn't have to face eternal death;
- (7) God glorified Christ because of his obedience;
- (8) God raised Christ to his original position at the Father's right hand, where he will reign forever as our Lord and Judge.

How can we do anything less than praise Christ as our Lord and dedicate ourselves to his service!

Often people excuse selfishness, pride, or evil by claiming their rights. They think, "I can cheat on this test; after all, I deserve to pass this class," or "I can spend all this money on myself—I worked hard for it," or "I can get an abortion; I have a right to control my own body." But as believers, we should have a different attitude, one that enables us to lay aside our rights in order to serve others. If we say we follow Christ, we must also say we want to live as he lived.

Jesus came to preach the Gospel

““The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor...but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”” Luke 4:18-19, 42; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2

Jesus quoted these words in Luke 4:18-19. As he read to the people in the synagogue, he stopped in the middle of Isaiah 61:2 after the words, “to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor.” Rolling up the scroll, he said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). The next phrase in Isaiah 61:2, “and the day of vengeance of our God,” will come true when Jesus returns to earth again. We are now under God’s favor; his wrath is yet to come.

Jesus came to Bring Judgment

“Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.” John 9:39-41

The Pharisees were shocked that Jesus thought they were spiritually blind. Jesus countered by saying that it was only blindness (stubbornness and stupidity) that could excuse their behavior. To those who remained open and recognized how sin had truly blinded them from knowing the truth, he gave spiritual understanding and insight. But he rejected those who had become complacent, self-satisfied, and blind.

Jesus came to give His Life a Ransom for Many

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

James and John wanted the highest positions in Jesus’ kingdom. But Jesus told them that true greatness comes in serving others. Peter, one of the disciples who had heard this message, expands the thought in 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Most businesses, organizations, and institutions measure greatness by high personal achievement. In Christ’s kingdom, however, service is the way to get ahead. The desire to be on top will hinder, not help. Rather than seeking to have your needs met, look for ways that you can minister to the needs of others.

This verse reveals not only the motive for Jesus’ ministry, but also the basis for our salvation. A ransom was the price paid to release a slave. Jesus paid a ransom for us because we could not pay it ourselves.

His death released all of us from our slavery to sin. The disciples thought Jesus’ life and power would save them from Rome; Jesus said his *death* would save them from sin, an even greater slavery than Rome’s. More about the ransom Jesus paid for us is found in 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Chapter 3

Waiting for that blessed hope

“...waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” Titus 2:13-14

The power to live as a Christian comes from the Holy Spirit. Because Christ died and rescued us from sin, we are free from sin’s control. God gives us the power and understanding to live according to his will and to do good. Then we will look forward to Christ’s wonderful return with eager expectation and hope.

It is not enough to renounce sin and evil desires; we must also live actively for God. To fight against lust we must say no to temptation, but we must also say yes to active service for Christ.

Christ’s redeeming us opens the way for him to purify us. *Redeem* means to purchase our release from the captivity of sin with a ransom (see Mark 10:45 for more on Christ as our ransom). We are not only free from the sentence of death for our sin, but we are also purified from sin’s influence as we grow in Christ.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law and Prophets

“For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” Matthew 5:17

God’s moral and ceremonial laws were given to help people love God with all their hearts and minds. Throughout Israel’s history, however, these laws had been often misquoted and misapplied. By Jesus’ time, religious leaders had turned the laws into a confusing mass of rules.

When Jesus talked about a new way to understand God's law, he was actually trying to bring people back to its *original* purpose. Jesus did not speak against the law itself, but against the abuses and excesses to which it had been subjected. (See John 1:17.)

If Jesus did not come to abolish the law, does that mean all the Old Testament laws still apply to us today? In the Old Testament, there were three categories of law: ceremonial, civil, and moral.

(1) The **ceremonial law** related specifically to Israel's worship (see Leviticus 1:2-3, for example). Its primary purpose was to point forward to Jesus Christ; these laws, therefore, were no longer necessary after Jesus' death and resurrection. While we are no longer bound by ceremonial laws, the principles behind them—to worship and love a holy God—still apply. Jesus was often accused by the Pharisees of violating ceremonial law.

(2) The **civil law** applied to daily living in Israel (see Deut. 24:10-11, for example). Because modern society and culture are so radically different from that time and setting, all of these guidelines cannot be followed specifically.

But the principles behind the commands are timeless and should guide our conduct. Jesus demonstrated these principles by example.

(3) The **moral law** (such as the Ten Commandments) is the direct command of God, and it requires strict obedience (see Exodus 20:13, for example). The moral law reveals the nature and will of God, and it still applies today. Jesus obeyed the moral law completely.

Jesus came to Reveal God's Love for Sinners

““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 3:16

The entire gospel comes to a focus in this verse. God's love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. Here God sets the pattern of true love,

the basis for all love relationships—when you love someone dearly, you are willing to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice.

God paid dearly with the life of his Son, the highest price he could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life that he had bought for us.

When we share the gospel with others, our love must be like Jesus’—willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God’s love.

Jesus came to Call Sinners to Repentance

“And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” Mark 2:17

The self-righteous Pharisees were indignant that Jesus would eat a meal with such sinners. But Jesus gladly associated with sinners because he loved them and because he knew that they needed to hear what he had to say. Jesus spent time with whoever needed or wanted to hear his message—poor, rich, bad, good. We, too, must befriend those who need Christ, even if they do not seem to be ideal companions.

Are there people you have been neglecting because of their reputation? They may be the ones who most need to see and hear the message of Christ’s love in and from you.

Jesus came to Die

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. “Now is my soul troubled. And what

shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.” John 12:24-27

This is a beautiful picture of the necessary sacrifice of Jesus. Unless a kernel of wheat is buried in the ground, it will not become a blade of wheat producing many more seeds. Jesus had to die to pay the penalty for our sin, but also to show his power over death. His resurrection proves he has eternal life. Because Jesus is God, Jesus can give this same eternal life to all who believe in him.

Jesus came to seek and save the Lost

“And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:5, 9-10

When Jesus said Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham and yet was lost, he must have shocked his hearers in at least two ways. They would not have liked to acknowledge that this unpopular tax collector was a fellow son of Abraham, and they would not have wished to admit that sons of Abraham could be lost. But a person is not saved by a good heritage or condemned by a bad one; faith is more important than genealogy. Jesus still loves to bring the lost into his kingdom, no matter what their background or previous way of life. Through faith, the lost can be forgiven and made new.

Jesus came to Serve

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ahead. The desire to be on top will hinder, not help. Rather than seeking to have your needs met, look for ways that you can minister to the needs of others.

This verse reveals not only the motive for Jesus' ministry, but also the basis for our salvation. A ransom was the price paid to release a slave. Jesus paid a ransom for us because we could not pay it ourselves. His death released all of us from our slavery to sin. The disciples thought Jesus' life and power would save them from Rome; Jesus said his *death* would save them from sin, an even greater slavery than Rome's. More about the ransom Jesus paid for us is found in 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Jesus came to Bring Peace

“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.” Ephesians 2:14-18

Christ has destroyed the barriers people build between themselves. Because these walls have been removed, we can have real unity with people who are not like us. This is true reconciliation. Because of Christ's death, we are all one (Ephes. 2:14); our hostility against each other has been put to death (Ephes. 2:16); we can all have access to the Father by the Holy Spirit (Ephes. 2:18); we are no longer foreigners or aliens to God (Ephes. 2:19); and we are all being built into a holy temple with Christ as our chief cornerstone (Ephes. 2:20-21).

There are many barriers that can divide us from other Christians: age, appearance, intelligence, political persuasion, economic status, race, theological perspective. One of the best ways to stifle Christ's love is to be friendly with only those people that we like. Fortunately, Christ has knocked down the barriers and has unified all believers in one family. His cross should be the focus of our unity. The Holy Spirit helps us look beyond the barriers to the unity we are called to enjoy.

By his death, Christ ended the angry resentment between Jews and Gentiles, caused by the Jewish laws that favored the Jews and excluded the Gentiles. Christ died to abolish that whole system of Jewish laws. Then he took the two groups that had been opposed to each other and made them parts of himself. “One new man” means that Christ made a single entity or person out of the two. Thus he fused all believers together to become one in himself.

The Jews were near to God because they already knew of him through the Scriptures and worshiped him in their religious ceremonies. The Gentiles were far away because they knew little or nothing about God.

Because neither group could be saved by good deeds, knowledge, or sincerity, both needed to hear about the salvation available through Jesus Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles are now free to come to God through Christ. You have been brought near to him (Ephes. 2:13).

Jews and Gentiles alike could be guilty of spiritual pride—Jews for thinking their faith and traditions elevated them above everyone else, Gentiles for trusting in their achievements, power, or position. Spiritual pride blinds us to our own faults and magnifies the faults of others. Be careful not to become proud of your salvation. Instead, humbly thank God for what he has done, and encourage others who might be struggling in their faith.

Jesus came to bring a Sword

““Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Matthew 10:34

Jesus did not come to bring the kind of peace that glosses over deep differences just for the sake of superficial harmony. Conflict and disagreement will arise between those who choose to follow Christ and those who don't. Yet we can look forward to the day when all conflict will be resolved.

Chapter 4

Jesus came to bind up Broken Hearts

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.” Isaiah 61:1-3

Jesus quoted these words in Luke 4:18-19. As he read to the people in the synagogue, he stopped in the middle of Isaiah 61:2 after the words, “to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor.” Rolling up the scroll, he said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). The next phrase in Isaiah 61:2, “and the day of vengeance of our God,” will come true when Jesus returns to earth again

Jesus came to give us the Spirit of Adoption

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

Jesus was soon going to leave the disciples, but he would remain with them. How could this be? The Counselor—the Spirit of God himself—would come after Jesus was gone to care for and guide the disciples. The regenerating power of the Spirit came on the disciples just before Jesus’ ascension (John 20:22), and the Spirit was poured out on all the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven.

The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God within us and all believers, helping us live as God wants and building Christ’s church on earth. By faith we can appropriate the Spirit’s power each day.

The word translated *Counselor* combines the ideas of comfort and counsel. The Holy Spirit is a powerful person on our side, working for and with us.

“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”” Galatians 4:6

The “basic principles of the world” are the elementary stages of religious practice, whether in the Jewish or pagan religion. Paul uses the illustration of slavery to show that before Christ came and died for sins, people were in bondage to the law. Thinking they could be saved by it, they became enslaved to trying—and failing—to keep it. But we who were once slaves are now God’s very own children who have an intimate relationship with him. Because of Christ, there is no reason to be afraid of God. We can come boldly into his presence, knowing that he will welcome us as his family members.

Under Roman law, an adopted child was guaranteed all legal rights to his father’s property, even if he was formerly a slave. He was not a second-class son; he was equal to all other sons, biological or adopted, in his father’s family. *Abba* is an Aramaic word for father. It was used by Christ in his prayer in Mark 14:36. As adopted children of God, we share with Jesus all rights to God’s resources. As God’s heirs, we can claim what he has provided for us—our full identity as his children (see Romans 8:15-17).

Jesus came to make us Partakers of the Divine Nature

“...by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” 2 Peter 1:4

The power to grow doesn’t come from within us, but from God. Because we don’t have the resources to be truly godly, God allows us to “participate in the divine nature” in order to keep us from sin and help us live for him. When we are born again, God by his Spirit empowers us with his own moral goodness. See John 3:6; John 14:17-23; 2 Cor. 5:21; and 1 Peter 1:22-23.

Jesus came to Reign as King

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” Isaiah 9:6-7

In a time of great darkness, God promised to send a light who would shine on everyone living in the shadow of death. He is both “Wonderful Counselor” and “Mighty God.” This message of hope was fulfilled in the birth of Christ and the establishment of his eternal kingdom. He came to deliver all people from their slavery to sin

Jesus came to restore Human Nature to Holiness

“And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.” Luke 1:35

Jesus was born without the sin that entered the world through Adam. He was born holy, just as Adam was created sinless. In contrast to Adam, who disobeyed God, Jesus obeyed God and was thus able to face sin’s consequences in our place and make us acceptable to God (Romans 5:14-19).

Jesus came to be a Merciful and Faithful High Priest

“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. ”Hebrews 2:17-18

In the Old Testament, the high priest was the mediator between God and his people. His job was to regularly offer animal sacrifices according to the law and to intercede with God for forgiveness for the people's sins. Jesus Christ is now our high priest. He came to earth as a human being; therefore, he understands our weaknesses and shows mercy to us. He has *once and for all* paid the penalty for our sins by his own sacrificial death (atonement), and he can be depended on to restore our broken relationship with God. We are released from sin's domination over us when we commit ourselves fully to Christ, trusting completely in what he has done for us (see the note on +Hebrews 4:14 for more about Jesus as the great high priest).

Knowing that Christ suffered pain and faced temptation helps us face our trials. Jesus understands our struggles because he faced them as a human being. We can trust Christ to help us survive suffering and overcome temptation. When you face trials, go to Jesus for strength and patience. He understands your needs and is able to help (see Hebrews 4:14-16).

Jesus came to be the Second and Greater Adam

“Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.” Romans 5:14-15

We were all born into Adam's physical family—the family line that leads to certain death. All of us have reaped the results of Adam's sin.

We have inherited his guilt, a sinful nature (the tendency to sin), and God's punishment. Because of Jesus, however, we can trade judgment for forgiveness. We can trade our sin for Jesus' righteousness. Christ offers us the opportunity to be born into his spiritual family—the family line that begins with forgiveness and leads to eternal life.

If we do nothing, we have death through Adam; but if we come to God by faith, we have life through Christ.

Jesus came to satisfy Our Deepest Thirst

“Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”” John 4:13-14

Many spiritual functions parallel physical functions. As our bodies hunger and thirst, so do our souls. But our souls need *spiritual* food and water. The woman confused the two kinds of water, perhaps because no one had ever talked with her about her spiritual hunger and thirst before. We would not think of depriving our bodies of food and water when they hunger or thirst.

Why then should we deprive our souls? The living Word, Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Bible, can satisfy our hungry and thirsty souls.

Jesus came to be loved by God’s Children

“Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.” John 8:42

Jesus came to reveal God’s Glory

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

“The Word became flesh” means becoming human. By doing so, Christ became (1) *the perfect teacher*—in Jesus’ life we see how God thinks and therefore how we should think (Phil. 2:5-11); (2) *the perfect example*—as a model of what we are to become, he shows us how to live and gives us the power to live that way (1 Peter 2:21); (3) *the perfect sacrifice*—Jesus came as a sacrifice for all sins, and his death satisfied God’s requirements for the removal of sin (Col. 1:15-23).

“The One and only, who came from the Father” means Jesus is God’s only and unique Son. The emphasis is on unique. Jesus is one of a kind and enjoys a relationship with God unlike all believers who are called “children” and said to be “born of God.”

When Christ was born, God became a man. He was not part man and part God; he was completely human and completely divine (Col. 2:9). Before Christ came, people could know God partially. After Christ came, people could know God fully because he became visible and tangible in Christ. Christ is the perfect expression of God in human form. The two most common errors people make about Jesus are to minimize his humanity or to minimize his divinity. Jesus is both God and man.

Jesus shall return in glory.

John 14:2-3

There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. [3] When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.

There are few verses in Scripture that describe eternal life, but these few verses are rich with promises. Here Jesus says, “I am going there to prepare a place for you,” and “I will come back.” We can look forward to eternal life because Jesus has promised it to all who believe in him.

Although the details of eternity are unknown, we need not fear because Jesus is preparing for us and will spend eternity with us.

There shall be signs of Christ’s return.

Matthew 24:29-31

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The nations of the earth will mourn because unbelievers will suddenly realize they have chosen the wrong side. Everything they have scoffed about will be happening, and it will be too late for the

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print