

# Bancroft Mission Sunday School Lessons

“Why I Believe”

These lessons are taken, in part, from a book, without permission, by Dr. D. James Kennedy.

1. Why I Believe in the Bible.
2. Why I Believe in God.
3. Why I Believe in Creation.
4. Why I Believe in Heaven.
5. Why I Believe in Hell.
6. Why I Believe in Moral Absolutes.
7. Why I Believe in Christ.
8. Why I Believe in the Virgin Birth.
9. Why I Believe in the Resurrection.
10. Why I Believe in Christianity.
11. Why I Believe in the Second Birth.
12. Why I Believe in the Holy Spirit.

Note from the writer of these outlines: **PLEASE TAKE THESE LESSONS HOME AND READ THEM. ESPECIALLY LESSON 3 ON CREATION.**

#### Introduction

From Dr. Kennedy: The scripture says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;" (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15).

'It is especially important in these days for Christians to be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them...Challenges from unbelievers and non-Christian religions confront us all around. Television, books, magazines, newspapers, online blogs, podcasts, movies, and other forms of media subject our faith to questioning in thousands of ways, large and small. As Christians who worship the One who is the incarnate *Logos*, or logic of God, we must be ready to speak to those who are openly antagonistic to our basic beliefs.

'When we do stand ready with a reason for our hope and do not know why we believe what we believe, we give others the impression that Christianity is a religion based merely upon blind faith or emotional prejudice. Nothing could be further from the truth! We often accuse those who reject Christianity without at least examining the evidence of being prejudiced. Then is it not also true that if a person accepts Christianity without examining the evidence, that, too, is nothing other than prejudice or gullibility?

'It is my hope that in stating the reason for my belief, I may help Christian readers to clarify their own thinking and to become better able to articulate and defend their faith. I hope also that many who may not have come to a decision for Christ will be convinced.'

## Lesson 1

## “Why I believe the Bible”

## I. Predictive Prophecy.

A. Deuteronomy 18:18-22, “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 ‘And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him. 20 ‘But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ 21 “And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ — 22 “when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

B. Isaiah 46:9&10, “Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning,...”

C. 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:20&21, “Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good.”

E. The biblical prophecies are quite specific, real, and genuine; they are unique because they do not exist anywhere else.

**It all the writings of Buddha, Confucius, and Lao-tse, you will not find a single example of predicted prophecy. In the Koran (the writings of Muhammad) there is one instance of a specific prophecy—a self-fulfilling prophecy—that he, Muhammad himself, would return to Mecca. Quite different from the prophecy of Jesus who said that He would return from the grave. One is easily fulfilled, and the other is impossible to any human being.**

F. Some predictive prophecies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

1. During the three presidential elections held in 1952, 1956, 1960, Jeane Dixon “prophesied” who the candidate would be for each of the major parties in all three of those elections, as well as who would win each election. She missed all of the candidates, all of the parties, and all of the winners of all the elections.

2. In a newspaper article dated January 7, 1975, there were published the predictions of ten leading seers or prophets in the world today for the events that were supposed to take place the last six months of that year; sixty-one (61) predictions in total. Not one of them was fulfilled.

From Dr. Kennedy, “It seemed to me that if a person predicted sixty-one things, he or she ought to be lucky enough to hit at least one. Perhaps God wanted to show people how incapable they are of predicting the future.

G. In the Old Testament alone, there are two-thousand predictive prophecies—not a few lucky guesses.

1. The prophecies of the Scripture are specific and detailed; they must be exactly fulfilled.

2. Examples: There are over two-thousand fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament alone. We will cite only two. Be encouraged to research more at your leisure.

a. Ezekiel 26:1-14, "And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, 'Aha! She is broken who was the gateway of the peoples; now she is turned over to me; I shall be filled; she is laid waste.' 3 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and **will cause many nations to come up against you**, (scripture continues on page 5)

Many nations:

Nebuchadnezzar

(Ancient Tyre consisted of two parts. The first part of the city was on the mainland and the second part was on an island just under a kilometer from the shoreline. The island city of Tyre was blessed with not one but two separate harbors which faced opposite sides of the island. The north Harbor (also called the "Sidonian Harbor") which is still in operation today was one of the best natural harbors on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea....**Nebuchadnezzar's Siege of Tyre**

Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Tyre began not long after Ezekiel's words against the city. According to the first century Jewish historian Josephus, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for an incredible 13 years: During the protracted, multi-year siege, Babylonian soldiers heads became bare from the chafing of their helmets, their shoulders rubbed raw from wearing armor and laboring long in the siege. Evidently, the mainland portion of the city fell to the Babylonians along with associated settlements in the surrounding area. The walls and towers of the mainland city were levelled along with the homes within. The neighboring settlements were razed to the ground and their inhabitants cruelly slaughtered.)

Alexander the Great (250 years after Ezekiel prophesied)

(The city became a slaughterhouse. 6,000 of the Tyrian defenders died in battle while reportedly, only 400 of Alexander's men died in the final fight for Tyre. Even if those numbers are exaggerated the disparity was surely great. 30,000 of the citizens of Tyre were subsequently sold into slavery while 2,000 soldiers who had survived the downfall were forced onto the beaches of Tyre and hung or nailed by the hands onto trees, posts and rudimentary frames until they were dead. The Roman empire would later famously employ this form of slow public execution called in Latin, "[crucifixion](#)".)

(continuation from page 4) as the sea causes its waves to come up. 4 'And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and **make her like the top of a rock. 5 'It shall be a place for spreading nets in the midst of the sea,**

Make her like the top of rock

Today:

(Tyre's southern harbor gradually filled with silt and has long since disappeared but the northern, "Sidonian" harbor is still used and is filled with fishing boats and pleasure craft.)

for I have spoken,' says the Lord GOD; 'it shall become plunder for the nations. 6 'Also her Daughter villages which are in the fields shall be slain by the sword. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.' 7 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, **I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon**, king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. 8 'He will slay with the sword your daughter villages in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. 9 'He will direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10 'Because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, the wagons, and the chariots, when he enters your gates, as men enter a city that has been breached. 11 'With the hooves of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. 12 'They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; **they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water.**

Stones, timber, and soil in the midst of the water

The invasion of Alexander the Great

(He ordered the construction of a large causeway (or mole), across the narrow channel towards Tyre, **using rubble from demolished buildings on the mainland**. The water was shallow, about two meters deep, and work progressed rapidly. But as the mole approached the island, the water became deeper and the seas heavy, and the Tyrians constantly harassed the builders by firing projectiles from the ramparts of the citadel.

To defend the mole, Alexander constructed two siege towers, 50 meters high, from timber and covered them with rawhides to protect against enemy fire arrows. Like most of Alexander's siege towers, these were moving artillery platforms, with catapults on the top. He positioned the towers at the end of the causeway, and from the top Alexander's army was able to return fire. The Tyrians responded by building a fireship. They took an old vessel, loaded it up with pitch, sulphur, and various other combustibles, hung cauldrons of oil from the mast, and set it on fire. Then they ran the burning ship aground at the mole, engulfing the two siege towers in flames. Other Tyrian vessels fired missiles at Macedonian builders driving off anyone who tried to put out the fires.

The destruction of the siege towers and parts of the causeway was a huge setback for Alexander, but the young king was determined to rebuild the causeway. He started at once on a second, wider mole that could hold more towers, but in the back of his mind he knew that the siege could only succeed when attacked with a fleet.

So Alexander set off for Sidon to fetch his own ships. He raided up and down the coast collecting Phoenician vessels and crews which have previously served with the Persians. Two Phoenician kings, Gerostratus of Aradus and Enylus of Byblos, willfully joined Alexander, perhaps guessing which way the fortunes of war would go. In addition, the Kings of Cyprus sent another 120 vessels to join him. Soon Alexander had a formidable fleet numbering over 250 vessels.

When Alexander arrived with his superior fleet, the Tyrians blocked their ports and barricaded themselves inside. With the ships keeping guard, Alexander resumed building the mole. The Tyrians tried to prevent Alexander's fleet from approaching too close to the city walls by creating obstacles in the sea with large numbers of stones hurled over the city walls. Alexander ordered the rocks hoisted out of the water with ropes so that a path could be cleared. The Tyrians then sent divers to cut the anchor ropes of the besieging ships. Alexander responded by replacing ropes with iron chains.

Eventually, the mole was extended all the way to the city allowing Alexander to bring his siege engines and battering rams to pound the walls with. A weak spot in the wall was found in the southern end where Alexander's army managed to crack open a hole. Once his troops forced their way into the city, they easily overtook the garrison, and quickly captured the city. The Macedonian army massacred Tyre's population, and only those who took shelter in the temple of Melqart were pardoned. Some 6,000 men were killed in action and another 2,000 Tyrians were crucified on the beach. The rest of the population, some 30,000 people, consisting mostly of civilians were sold to slavery. Alexander's men themselves suffered little casualties, with only about 400 killed.)

13 'I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. 14 'I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,' says the Lord GOD."

(The prophecy of [Ezekiel 26:14](#) does *not* mean there would never be anything built on the island. It means that, after its final defeat by wave after wave of conquerors, Tyre would never regain the status it held in Ezekiel's day. Tyre would never again be a commercial superpower, a world trader, or a colonizer. Tyrians would never again possess the riches and prosperity they had in their city's heyday.

When God told Tyre, "You will never be rebuilt," He did not lie. Ancient Tyre was stripped of its glory and strength. Modern Tyre is but a shadow of its former reality. The businesses and dwellings that now stand on the ancient site are a far cry from the luxury, greatness, or influence of the original city-state. *That* Tyre—the Tyre judged by God—will never be reconstituted or rebuilt.)

b. Consider Babylon—Isaiah 13:19-22, "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. 21 But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there. 22 The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time *is* near to come, And her days will not be prolonged."

From Dr. Kennedy— "The magnificent city of Babylon, perhaps the greatest city in ancient times. The walls were fourteen or fifteen miles long. The city consisted of one hundred ninety-six square miles of the most beautiful architecture, hanging gardens and palaces, temples and towers. She drew her stores from no foreign country. She invented an alphabet, worked out the problems of arithmetic, invented implements for measuring time, and advanced beyond all previous peoples in

science. Yet God said of Babylon when it was the greatest city in the world: 'And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.' (verse 19).

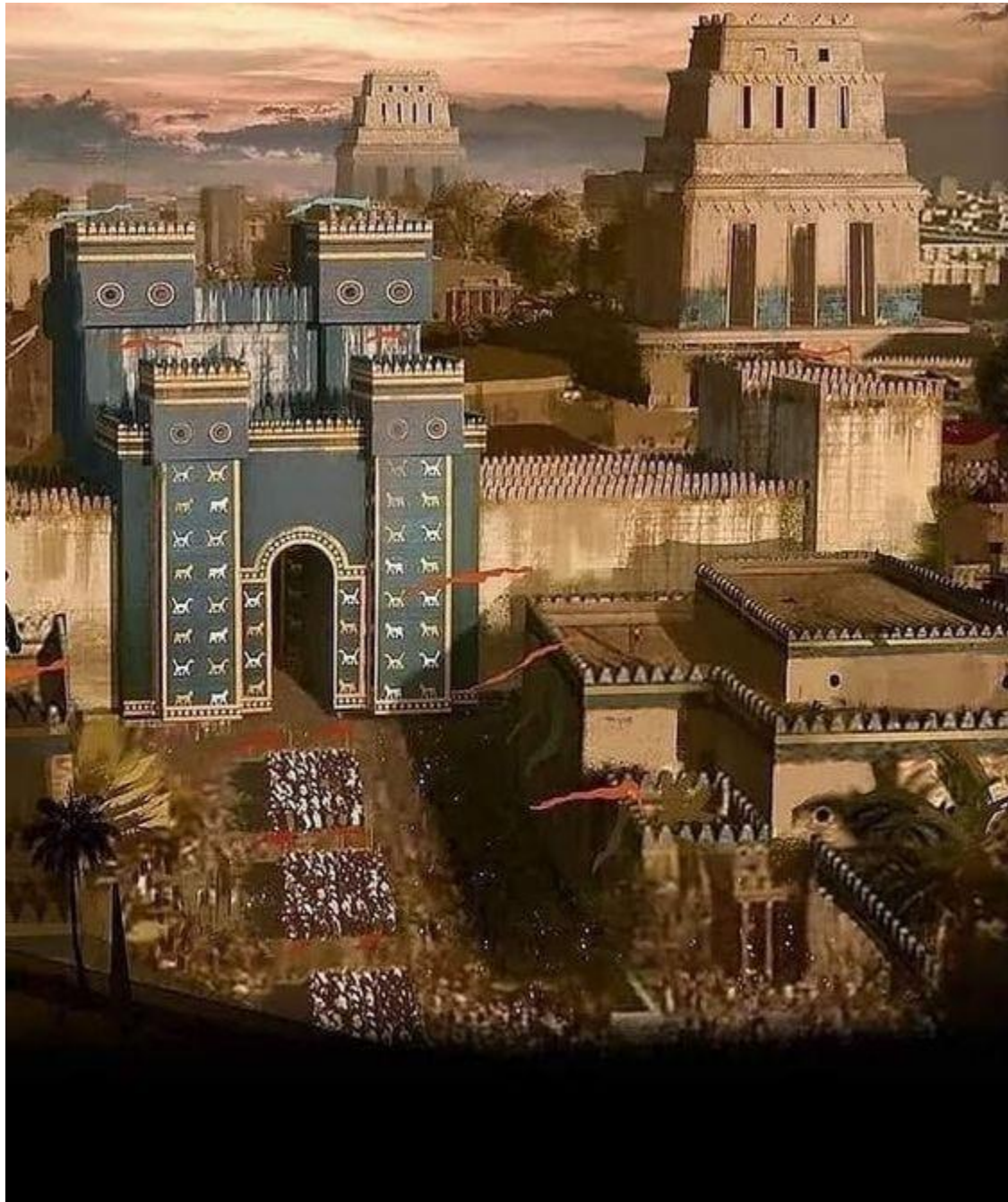
There are more than one hundred specific prophecies concerning Babylon's fate. Consider the great walls of Babylon. The historian Herodotus tells us that these walls had towers that extended above the 200-foot walls to a height of 300 feet. The walls were 187 feet thick at the base and enclosed an area of 196 square miles. The city of Babylon was impregnable. But God said of those towers and that city: 'The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken...It shall be desolate forever'(Jeremiah 51:58, 62). **Is that prophecy vague or ambiguous? In no way!**

The prophet could not possibly have written his prediction after the event because the fulfillment of the prophecy was not completed until after the time of Christ. The Old Testament had been completed and translated into Greek five hundred years before.

But God had much more to say about this city: 'Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate...It shall be no more inhabited forever' (Jeremiah 50:13, 39). Could anything be more specific than that? Have these prophecies been fulfilled? I have seen pictures of Babylon. It is a trackless waste of huge mounds and heaps, inhabited only by the jackal, the viper, and the scorpion. Skeptics themselves have described it as nothing but heaps; they tell us that ruins compose the only remains of Babylon. Ruins like those of Babylon composed of heaps of rubbish impregnated with niter, cannot be cultivated. Babylon, whose fields around the city were so fertile that Herodotus refused to write about them lest people think him insane, now can grow nothing because God has doomed the area to perpetual desolation, and not a blade of grass will survive. It is a barren desert.

Claudius James Rich, in his *Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon in 1811*, points out: 'For the space of two months throughout the year the ruins of Babylon are inundated by the annual overflowing of the Euphrates so as to render many parts of them inaccessible by converting the valleys into morasses.'... **But God said it would never be built again—a prophecy totally contrary to all the expectations of the past, where every city of the Near East that had been destroyed had been built again. Babylon was situated in the most fertile part of Euphrates valley, yet twenty-five hundred years have come and gone, and Babylon to this day remains an uninhabited waste.**

Babylon at its Peak





Babylon Today



## Lesson 2

## “Why I Believe in God”

Psalm 53:1, “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

First introduction: Since we have established the absolute truth of the Bible, this lesson could simply state: “I believe in God because the Bible says so!” However, we want to instill into the very soul the truth of the reality of God.

Second introduction (From Dr. Kennedy): Is there a God or not? This question eclipses all other questions that mankind might ask. Should you feel that statement is the opinion of a theologian or a preacher, then listen to this statement found in the *The Great Ideas Syntipicon*, the crucial study guide for the Great Books series, a remarkable collection of most of the combined wisdom of Western civilization from the time of Thales to the present. Mortimer Adler states, “With the exception of certain mathematicians and physicists, all authors of the Great Books are represented in the chapter on God.” The reason is obvious. More consequences for thought and action follow the affirmation or denial of God than the answering of any other basic question. The whole tenor of human life is affected by whether men regard themselves as the supreme being in the universe or acknowledge a superhuman being whom they conceive of as an object of fear or love and a force to be defied or a Lord to be obeyed. The significance of this question and the evidence for the existence of God are the great debate for and against atheism. For most of this century, militant atheism has spread like a deadly fungus across our world to the point that the twentieth century has been called the century of atheism. But the times are a-changing. As the twentieth has been called the century of atheism, the twenty-first century, as an increasing number of intellectuals are saying, is probably going to be a century of spirituality. The pillars of secularism, atheism, and materialism are crumbling.

I. Science.

A. In his book *God, the Atom, and the Universe*, James Reid states, “Science is preparing a surprise for mankind. At least it will be a surprise for those who have doubts about the Bible and its God. It will also come as a surprise for those who are laboring under the misapprehension that science has undermined the Bible. In fact, it may even shock some scientists, who may be startled to find that their newly uncovered fact, or accepted theory, provides still another link in the chain of evidence that is showing that the facts of the universe support the Bible’s statements—including creation...the new disciplines of quantum physics—quantum theory and quantum mechanics—have totally transformed the scientific world. Now he is discovering that true science supports the statements of Scripture.

B. *Cosmos, Bios & Theos* (English—Universe, life, and God). A book written by sixty notable scientists including twenty-four Nobel prize winners. The coeditor to that book, Yale physicist and Nobel Laureate Professor Henry Margenau, concludes that “there is only one convincing answer” for the intricate laws that exist in nature— “creation by an omnipotent-omniscient God.”

C. Astronomy (a branch of science).

1. Psalm 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.”

2. Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead,..."

3. Dr. Robert Jastrow, one of the world's great astronomers, was founder and director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies at NASA.

a. In his book *God and the Astronomers* says, "strange developments" are going on in astronomy. One of these was the discovery that the universe had a beginning. And that means that there had to be a "Beginner." Dr. Jastrow went on to say, "**The scientist has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak, and as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.**"

b. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, Jastrow said "Astronomers now find they have painted themselves into a corner because they have proven, by their own methods, that the world began abruptly in an act of creation to which you can trace the seeds of every star, every planet, every living thing in this cosmos and on the earth. And they have found that all this happened as a product of forces they cannot hope to discover. That there are what I or anyone would call supernatural forces at work is now, I think, a scientifically proven fact."

II. Many arguments for the existence of God.

A. Cosmological argument.

1. "Cosmological argument" comes from the term *cosmos*, which means "the universe" and from which we get the word *cosmetic*. **It means ordered and beautiful.**

2. Quantum physics has demonstrated that at the level of subatomic particles, there is an irresistible urge of electrons toward symmetry and that there is an amazing cosmetic aspect to the universe.

3. Consider the mass and size of this planet upon which we have been placed. It is just right. Dr. Wallace says that if the earth were either 10 percent larger or 10 percent smaller than it is, life would not be possible.

4. Consider the amazing fact of the tilt of the axis of the earth. None of the other planets is tilted as ours—23 degrees. This angle shows that the earth is slowly turned in all parts of its surface before the rays of the sun. If there were no tilt to the axis, the poles would accumulate enormous masses of ice, and the center part of the earth would become intensely hot.

5. Our moon.

a. Without the moon it would be impossible to live on this planet.

b. Without the tides created by the moon, all our harbors and shores would become one stench pool of garbage.

c. Because of the tides, continuous waves break upon the shores of the ocean, aerating the oceans of this planet and providing oxygen for the plankton (Plankton are marine drifters — organisms carried along by tides and currents. Plankton don't swim on their own—they're carried by tides, currents, and other forces, which determine where they go. Plankton are an important

food source for many large and small ocean creatures. They also play a vital role in absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen in the ocean) which is the very foundation of the food chain of our world. Without the plankton, there would not be oxygen, and man would not be able to live upon this earth.

B. Human beings.

1. Our life is based upon the blood that flows in our veins. The amazing red blood cell, created in the bone marrow, immediately gives up its nucleus when it reaches the bloodstream. For any other cell, this would mean death, like cutting the heart right out of a man. A red blood cell is formed like a doughnut with a thin membrane across the hole. Without a nucleus it is able to carry more oxygen for the body because of this membrane and the shape of the cell. If it were shaped like other cells, it would require nine times as many cells to provide oxygen for the human body.

2. The wonder of the eye.

a. How could anybody look at a human eye and suppose that it just happened.

b. Evolutionists tell us that where there is want, nature will provide what is needed. Can you imagine that we needed sight? No one had ever seen anything, but there was a need to see something. So, nature created an eye. Imagine creating two eyes on a horizontal plane so that we can not only see but also have a range finder that determines distances.

From Dr. Kennedy, "Did you ever wonder what happens to your tears that continually flow across your eyes? Dr. William Paley wrote a classic work titled *Naturally Theology* in which he discusses the eye. 'In order to keep the eye moist and clean—which qualities are necessary to its brightness and its use—a wash is constantly supplied by a secretion for the purpose; and the superfluous brine is conveyed to the nose through perforation in the bone as large as a goose quill. When once the fluid has entered the nose, it spreads itself up in the inside of the nostril and is evaporated by the current of warm air which in the course of respiration is continually passing over it...It is easily perceived that the eye must want moisture; but could the want of the eye generate the gland which produces the tear, or bore the hole by which it discharged—a hole through a bone?' Let the atheist or the evolutionist tell us who bored the hole in the bone and laid a water pipe through it for the dispersion of tears.

3. The mind.

a. Sir Henry Fairfield Osborn, the noted modern anthropologist, said: "To my mind, the human brain is the most marvelous and mysterious object in the whole universe."

b. "Weighing but 3.3 pounds, it can perform what 500 tons of electrical and electronic equipment cannot do."

c. "Containing 10 to 15 billion (BILLION) neurons, each a living unit in itself, it performs feats that absolutely boggle the mind."

The conclusion, From Dr. Kennedy, "Not only are these compelling reasons for the existence of God, but I believe in God because I believe in Jesus Christ. The prophecies, the birth, the life, the miracles, the teachings, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and His continuous performance of those

things He said He would do convince me that God lives and that God lived in Jesus Christ and even now can transform people.

‘The heart is a God-shaped blank, and only God can fill it. That maxim has been around for more than 1,700 years. Today there are millions of people who are trying to fill their hearts with everything except God and they do not succeed. What an incredible truth—only God can fill it. You cannot run a jet plane on tomato juice and cannot fill the God-shaped blank of the human heart created by Him, for Him, with anything else at all.’

‘We cannot wrap our minds around the infinite God, or we would be greater than He is. We can apprehend Him, but we cannot comprehend Him entirely.’

I believe in God. However, to believe in Him is not enough, for even the devil believes and trembles (James 2:19). It is necessary not only that we believe He exists but also that we believe He became incarnate in Jesus Christ and that He died for our sins. It is necessary that we believe and that we cast ourselves at His feet and place our trust in Him—in His atoning death for our salvation. I believe in Him, and I know He is alive. He lives in my heart, and He has granted me the assurance that I shall live with Him forever. It is my earnest desire that that assurance may be yours if it is not already. Have you trusted in Him?

## Lesson 3

## “Why I Believe in Creation”

Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 1:1 (BBE-Bible in Basic English), “At the first God made the heaven and the earth.”

Shawn Arthur: “The world is the canvas of God’s thoughts.”

Introduction (From Dr. Kennedy):

“Examining creation will bring us closer to the Creator. That is what the earliest founders of science believed, or as the founder of astronomy put it, we would be merely thinking God’s thoughts after Him.

But something happened on the way to the twentieth century. In the middle of the nineteenth century when modern science began to develop, the entire scientific enterprise was hijacked.

I am referring to Darwin’s theory of evolution. Canada’s leading scientist, who was chosen to write the Introduction to the centennial edition of *The Origin of the Species*, said that the greatest evil Darwin has brought upon the world is to somehow divide science from God and, in fact, set the two at each other’s throats.

The theory of evolution has had an enormous and devastating impact upon the modern world in which we live. Michael Denton, author of a fascinating book titled *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, wrote:

‘The voyage on *The Beagle* [Darwin’s ship on which he set sail from England in 1831] was a journey of awesome significance. Its object was to survey Patagonia; its result was to shake the foundations of western thought. *The Origin of the Species* [which followed] has been referred to as ‘one of the most important books ever written’ [it is because it seeks to shake the foundation of the most important book ever written]. As far as Christianity was concerned, the advent of the theory of evolution and the elimination of traditional teleological thinking was catastrophic.’”

I. Teleological thinking.

A. **To think teleologically is to believe life has purpose and an end.**

1. The evolutionist believes nothing has purpose or an end.

2. Naturalism and Materialism.

a. Naturalism believes that there is nothing in the universe but nature, nothing supernatural.

b. Materialism believes that there is nothing in the world but matter.

From Dr. Kennedy: “What does it mean? It means that we live in a time when there are only two religions competing for the minds, hearts, and loyalties of Western man. The future of this world will be determined, humanly speaking, by Western man. One of those religions is Christianity; the other religion is evolution. Anyone who does not realize that evolution is a religion does not know much about evolution. It is a religion that is passionately held by its devotees. Listen to what some well-known

evolutionists, all highly placed scientists in the world, have to say. Professor Louis T. More, one of the most vocal evolutionists: 'The more one studies paleontology [the fossil record], the more certain one becomes that evolution is based on faith alone.' Professor D. M. S. Watson, a famous evolutionist, made the remarkable observation that evolution itself is a theory universally accepted, 'not because it has been observed to occur or can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative—special creation—is clearly incredible.' To the reprobate, the unregenerate mind, creation is incredible because it requires belief in a creator, and that is totally unacceptable to such men as these. A famous British evolutionist, Sir Arthur Keith, is just as frank in his admission. He says, 'Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, which is unthinkable.'

What would happen if I were to stand up before my congregation and say, 'My friends, Christianity is unproved and unprovable but still you ought to believe it'? They would get up and walk out, and rightly so. But that is how men accept evolution—by blind faith!"

B. Evolution.

1. Dr. Duane Gish, noted biologist, says, "Evolution is a fairy tale for adults."

2. **Dr. Arthur Field says: "Evolution is based upon belief in the reality of the unseen belief in fossils that cannot be produced, in embryological evidence that does not exist and belief in breeding experiments that refuse to come off'."**

3. Dr. John Howitt of London: "Evolution is based and accepted on faith alone: for three-fourths of the record is non-existent and there are gaps which are systematic that cannot be covered." (where are the intermediate links?)

C. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

1. This was written 3500 years ago.

2. It is NOT possible to combine the Bible and evolution.

a. Thomas Huxley, probably the most famous (or infamous) proponent of evolution who ever lived, stated, "It is clear that the doctrine of evolution is directly antagonistic to that of Creation...Evolution, if consistently accepted, makes it impossible to believe the Bible."

b. Hitler accepted the evolutionary platitudes of Nietzsche: the idea of a super race. "*Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*," a subtitle to Darwin's book, had to do with the survival of the fittest race—Hitler's master race was simply an outgrowth of evolutionary thinking.

c. Mussolini, who frequently quoted Darwin in catch phrases, said that the idea of peace was repugnant to the idea of the survival of the fittest and progress of the race; war was essential for the survival of the fittest.

d. Karl Marx asked Darwin to write the introduction to *Das Kapital* since he felt that Darwin had provided a scientific foundation for communism.

3. In the first chapter of Genesis, the Hebrew term *bara*, indicating the direct creation of God, is used three times.
  - a. For the creation of matter—the material cosmos.
  - b. For the creation of life.
  - c. For the creation of man.
4. One of the three uses of *bara*, the creation of the material universe.
  - a. “Big bang” theory—once the universe was in one great condensed piece of matter and then it exploded with an explosion beyond our comprehension.
  - b. It was an explosion that threw out particles the size of the Milky Way, our galaxy.
  - c. These are speeding outward into space.
    - If true, that would indicate that the universe was not eternal and had a beginning.
    - To overcome this, they said it would slow down and finally come to a stop.
    - Then gravity would pull it back together again, and it would oscillate back and forth throughout all eternity, recreating itself.
    - **After years of study and calculation, two respected California astronomers, Allan Sandage and James Gunn, made separate but similar announcements: The universe will continue to expand forever.**

**From Dr. Kennedy, “Gunn and Gustav Tammann, who did their work at the Mount Palomar 200-inch-telescope observatory, say that the arguments for a closed universe are almost ‘theological in nature.’**

**People hold to them passionately because if they give them up, they must then acknowledge a beginning of the universe. Along with a beginning, there must be a creator, a God, to whom they must answer. ‘This expansion is such a strange conclusion,’ Gunn said, ‘that one’s first assumption is that it cannot really be true, and yet, it is the premier fact.’ And for that premier of modern astronomy—that the universe had a beginning—the evolutionist now has no explanation whatsoever.”**

## II. The Creation of life.

- A. Darwin repeatedly referred to the simple single cell.
  1. With the crude microscopes available in his time, the single cell looked a little bit like a tiny basketball with a seed in the middle of it.
  2. But now the human cell is known to be fantastically complex, made up of hundreds of thousands of smaller protein molecules.



3. Harvard University paleontologist George Gaylor Simpson tells us that a single protein molecule is the most complicated substance known to mankind. A single cell is so infinitely complex that it boggles the minds of scientists who have studied it.

B. The science of probability.

1. **Dr. James Coppedge, Ph.D., director of the Center for Probability Research in Biology in California, applied all the laws of probability studies to the possibility of a single cell coming into existence by chance. He considered in the same way a single protein molecule, and even a single gene. His discoveries are revolutionary. He computed a world in which the entire crust of the earth—all the oceans, all the atoms, and the whole crust were available. He then had these amino acids bind at a rate one and one-billion times faster than they do by nature. In computing the possibilities, he found that to provide a single protein molecule by chance combination would take  $10^{262}$  years. Most of us do not have any idea what that means. To get a single cell—the single smallest living cell known to mankind—which is called the mycoplasma hominis H 39, would take  $10^{119,841}$  years. That means that if you took thin pieces of paper and wrote zeros after them, you would fill up the entire known universe with paper before you could ever even write that number. That is how many years it would take to make one living cell, one smaller than any human cell!**

2. Evolutionists would have us believe that things vastly more complex than this happens all the time.

Emile Borel, the great French scientist and probability expert, points out that if anything on the cosmic level is of a probability ration of more than  $10^{50}$  to 1, it will never happen. The probability of producing a human cell by chance is  $10^{119,000}$  1, a number we cannot even comprehend.

C. Thomas Huxley said: “The primary and direct evidence in favor of evolution can be furnished by paleontology...If evolution has taken place, its mark will be left; if it has not taken place, **there will be its refutation [the action of proving a statement or theory to be wrong or false]**”

1. The great evolutionist says that it is only in paleontology—only in the fossil record—that evolution will be proved.

2. Geological research...does not yield the infinitely many successive changes between past and present species. The author of that statement was Charles Darwin.

3. George Gaylord Simpson of Harvard, the high priest of evolution today, stated, “In spite of these examples, it remains true, as every paleontologist knows, that most new species, genera, and families, and that nearly all categories above the level of families, appear in the record suddenly and are not led up to by known, gradual, completely continuous transitional sequences.

**We know that in the Cambrian strata of rock, all the invertebrate animals in the world suddenly appear completely complex creatures with no ancestors before them, which is totally inexplicable to the evolutionists.**

From Dr. Kennedy, “If you think that is amazing, a scientist by the name of Geoffrey Bourne recently stated that his examination of men and apes has

led him to the definite conclusion that apes evolved from men. Another scientist, B. C. Nelson, examining similarities in blood between various animals, has concluded that a pig is the closest relative to a human being—not an ape. If those differing conclusions can be drawn from the same evidence, what kind of evidence is being looked at?”

From Dr. Kennedy, “The evolutionist T. H. Morgan said in his book, *Evolution and Adaptation*: ‘Within the period of human history we do not know of a single instance of the transformation of one species into another one...It may be claimed that the theory of descent is lacking, there, in the most essential feature that it needs to place the theory on a scientific basis. This must be admitted.’ Not a single instance, and yet Huxley claims that if the evidence isn’t there, it is nowhere to be found.

It is not there! Some of the greatest scientists in the world look upon evolution as something absolutely absurd, impossible, and unprovable.

### III. The Truth.

A. God made you and me.

B. Hundreds of books and articles have been written in the last decades of the twentieth century that point out that evolution is falling apart, that there are fissures appearing in the walls and floors, that the columns have collapsed.

C. Arthur Denton wrote, “The suggestion that life and man are the result of chance is incompatible with the biblical assertion or their being the direct result of intelligent creative activity. It was because Darwinian theory broke man’s link with God and set him adrift in a cosmos without purpose or end that its impact was so fundamental.”

D. There is purpose in our lives and there will be an end.

**Psalm 139:14, “I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well.”**

Conclusion from Dr. Kennedy, “One day we will give an account to Him of our lives. The Scripture plainly declares that all of us have transgressed His law and are culpable in His sight and when we come before Him, if we are judged according to our merits, we will deserve to be condemned forever. This means that we have no hope except in His mercy and that mercy has been manifested in Jesus Christ, His Son, whom He sent into this world to live in our place and die in our stead. His Word declares that if we will place our trust in Christ, He will freely forgive us our sins and give us the gift of eternal life. One day we will stand before our Creator. If we are trusting in some supposed goodness, morality, piety, or religiosity in ourselves, we will not make it. Let us flee to the cross to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ that we may stand faultless before our Creator.

## Lesson 4

## “Why I Believe in Heaven”

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:1-5,” For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:1 NLT, “For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands.”

Introduction from Dr. Kennedy, “No question has plagued the minds of men and women more continuously and universally than the question raised by Job so many centuries ago. The earliest book of the Old Testament echoes forth that question that has been wrenched from the hearts of innumerable people ever since: from a husband and wife as, with clenched hands, they have looked down on the cold face of their little child in a casket; from comrades as they have looked down at the shattered body of soldier in arms. In every family where there is an empty chair, the question has been inescapably wrung from their hearts, in the words of Job: “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14).

More than thirteen hundred years ago in the portion of England known as Northumbria, the first Christian missionaries arrived. They came to the courts of King Edwin of Northumbria, and in his great hall ablaze with the light of many torches, huge logs in the fireplace, and grizzled chieftains surrounding them, these Christians missionaries gave their first discourse on the Christian faith. When they had finished, one asked, ‘Can this new religion tell us anything of what happens after death? The soul of man is like a sparrow flying through this lighted hall. It enters at one door from the darkness outside, flits through the light and warmth, and passed out at the further end into the dark again. Can this new religion solve for us this mystery?’

**I, for one, am convinced that this new religion, now old with age, is the only one that can give us any sure and certain word concerning life after death.”**

I. Analogy from nature.

William Jennings Bryan in his *Analogies of Nature*: “Christ gave us proof of immortality, and yet it would hardly seem necessary that one should rise from the dead to convince us that the grave is not the end. If the Father deigns to touch with Divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth into a new life, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rosebush whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay? No, I am as sure that there is another life as I am that I live today.”

II. The universal longing for eternity.

A. In his book *After Death—What?* Dr. Madison C. Peters said, “The flocks and herds upon a thousand hills, the myriad forms of insect life, every winged fly and tuneful beetle, the fish that gaily sport and gambol in the rivers and seas, all can find the end of their being...But never so with man. He only is never satisfied no matter what the wealth or fame or knowledge or power or earthly pleasures. From the king to the beggar, ‘man never is, but always to be blest.’ “

B. God has immortality—eternity—in the heart of man.

From Dr. Kennedy, “Wherever men have gone in the world, they have certain innate ideas in the human heart and mind. They do not arise from experience; they are there, inbred, and these innate ideas are the corresponding human ideas to the instincts of animals. What are they? There is everywhere a belief in God. There is everywhere a belief in right and wrong. There is a belief in cause and effect. There is a belief in time and space. And there is a universally found belief in immortality. There have been some who have denied this. Dr. Edwards made an exhaustive search to try to find some tribe, however remote, that did not have some belief in immortality. That belief may be distorted; it may be but a dim reflection of the glory that really is; but nevertheless, however perverted or distorted, every instance he found in which some group appeared not to believe in immortality dissolved in the light of further examination.

There has never been a race of men upon this earth—whether in the deepest heart of Africa, in the South Seas, or on the highest mountain—that has not a belief in some future life, whether it the happy hunting grounds of the American Indians, some palace in the sky, some sensual abode of the Muslim. What is the explanation? Long before the evidence for this universal belief had been collected, Cicero said this: ‘In everything the consent of all nations is to be accounted the law of nature, and to resist it is to resist the voice of God.’ “

C. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “How strongly we may be chained and attached to this earth, by thousands and thousands of appearances, a certain intimate longing compels us to lift up our eyes to heaven; because a deep inexplicable feeling gives us the conviction that we are citizens of another world, which shines above us.”

Alfred Lord Tennyson

For tho’ from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

Lord George Gordon Byron

I feel my immortality o’ersweep  
All pains, all tears, all fears, and peal,  
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,  
Into my ears this truth— “Thou liv’st for ever!

III. We have been made for eternity.

**From Dr. Kennedy, “Yet though such a belief exists in every ancient religion from the Egyptian to the Persian to the Assyrian and Babylonian, the Chinese and Hindu, everywhere it has waited for Jesus Christ to give to it a certitude nothing else could grant.**

Professor Adolf Von Harnack said: ‘Christ’s grave was the birth of an indestructible belief that death is vanquished and there is life eternal. It is useless to cite Plato; it is useless to point to the Persian religion and the ideas and literature of later Judaism. All that would have perished; but the certainty of the resurrection and of a life eternal which is bound up with the grave in Joseph’s garden as not perished; and on the conviction that Jesus lives we still base those hopes of citizenship in an Eternal City which make our earthly life worth living and tolerable. HE delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” “He is risen” is the certain and sure hope of those who trust in Him. Not only do we have the universal testimony of mankind, but **we also have the testimony of Jesus Christ and His resurrection.**

A. Dr. Simon Greenleaf, the Royal Professor of Law at Harvard, one of the greatest authorities on legal evidence the world has ever known, turned the vast starlight of his immense knowledge of evidences upon the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and exposed every thread of the evidence to the most searching criticism. He came to the conclusion that the evidence was so overwhelming that in any unbiased courtroom in the world it would be declared to be a historical fact.

1. Every shred of evidence for the resurrection of Christ is evidence for eternal life in heaven.
2. Revelation 1:18, “*I am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore...”
3. John 14:19, “...Because I live, you will live also.”

**From Dr. Kennedy, “We should also consider the evidence for the inspiration of the Scriptures is a revelation from God. It is also evidence for the fact of eternal life. Those evidences themselves are so powerful that they cannot be gainsaid. Never has a skeptic been able to overturn or overthrow the evidences for the inspiration of the Scriptures. Those evidences are also further support for the fact of eternal life in heaven, for those same Scriptures declare most assuredly that those who trust in Christ shall live forever. Remember also that evidence for God is evidence for eternal.**

#### IV. The evidence of dying.

From Dr. Kennedy, “In my library there are a number of books containing within them the last words of thousands of famous people when they came to the place of death. One thing is absolutely clear—those who believed in Jesus Christ died in a way remarkably different from those who did not. An unbelieving psychiatrist heard the evidences for the resurrection of Christ presented. This man said that he had ‘seen enough people die to know that there is a difference between and evangelical Christian dying and anyone else.’”

Newer evidence that goes even further has been given to us by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and Dr. Raymond Moody, two psychiatrists. When Dr. Kubler-Ross first presented to the world the evidences of her studies, she described herself as a nonreligious person. This woman, considered by many the world’s leading authority on death and dying, has attended thousands upon thousands of terminally ill patients. In her work she began to encounter the phenomenon of people pronounced clinically dead who were resuscitated—at first two or three, then more and more. Between them, she and Dr. Moody have examined more than five hundred people who have died and come back.

Those people have described either a place of beauty, wonder, joy, and peace, or they have described something terrible. These people have floated out of their bodies, and though out of their bodies they had bodies that were real, and though blind they could see while they were called ‘dead’ by doctors. They tell about who came into the room, what those persons looked like, and what they did. Yet when they were brought back, the blind could not see.”

Testimony of our dear Lois Bailey. When Lois was unhooked from all life support, she spoke some last words. Just a few short minutes before she breathed her last she said, “In a few minutes I’m going to see Jesus. I’m going to see Roe (her husband), Rusty (her son), mother and daddy, Danny (her brother).” About five minutes after that, she saw them all.

Testimony of Denver Allen. When Denver was hooked up to life support machines he could not talk. He had a slate on which he could write. With no one in the room but Denver and me, we had a little conversation. Knowing he had just a few more minutes in this life, Denver’s last words, written on the slate were, “I love all.”

**Revelation 14:13, “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors...;”**

Some things to think about.

- Paul, the apostle, believed it important for us to know what happens when we die.

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13 NLT, “And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.”

Philippians 1:20-23, “according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will

mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”

- Present heaven and New heaven

When Christians die, they enter what is called a transitional period between their past lives on Earth and their future resurrected life in the “New heaven and the New earth.” Life we go to in the present heaven is far better than the life on this present earth where “life happens.” However, the present heaven does not compare to our eternal abode.

Revelation 21:1, “Now I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.”

The present heaven is a temporary residence where departed saints live until the return of Christ and our bodily resurrection. The eternal heaven is our true home, the place where we will live forever.

- Consciousness after death

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:8, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

Luke 16:22-24, ““So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 “And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’”

At death, the human spirit either goes to heaven or hell.

These verses make it clear that there is no such thing as “soul sleep.” The phrase “fallen asleep” in the KJV has confused some. The spirit’s departure from the body ends our existence on earth. The physical part of us “sleeps” until the final resurrection.

Every reference in Revelation to human beings talking and worshiping in heaven prior to the resurrection of the dead demonstrates that our spiritual beings are conscious, not sleeping, after death.

- The present heaven is a physical place.

Revelation 2:7, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

Hebrews 12:1, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...”

Luke 15:10, “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

- Life in the present heaven

Rejoicing

Revelation 19:1-6, “After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God! 2

“For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her.” 3 Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!” 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!” 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”

#### Time

Revelation 6:10&11, “And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “**How long**, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest **a little while longer**, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

#### Memory

Revelation 6:9&10, “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

Luke 16:25, “But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented”

Matthew 12:36, “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.”

The “present heaven” is so great and glorious that it overshadows all pain, struggle, and all other “life events” in the present earth existence.

#### Aware of earth events

Revelation 19:1&2, “After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! 2 “For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.”

Luke 9:30&31, “And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, 30 who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

Luke 15:10, “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy **in the presence of the angels** of God over one sinner who repents.”



- The New Heaven

Revelation 21:1-4, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Conclusion from Dr. Kennedy, "We will live forever, somewhere! For some it will be in the bliss and felicity of heaven, where the mind of man and the heart of man never have conceived what glories God has prepared for those that love and trust Him. Others will live never-endingly in hell! Ignore it, laugh at it, repress it, suppress it, but this will happen nonetheless!

How then does one go to heaven? Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (john 14:5). So many follows in Thomas's train, not knowing the way. Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (v. 6).

The way to heaven is as narrow as the cross. Only those who are willing to humble themselves and acknowledge their sin and place their trust in the Son of God who died in their stead will ever enter the gates of heaven. There are two personal truths I know about myself. The first is: I ought to go to hell because that is where I belong. In ten thousand times, in ten thousand ways, in word and thought, omission and commission, I have transgressed the holy law of God. I stand guilty before God, condignly deserving His just displeasure. But the second truth, which I know equally, is that I am going to heaven because Jesus Christ went to hell on a cross for me. I have no other hope but Him and His free gift. "Let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

## Lesson 5

## “Why I Believe in Hell”

John Lennon expressed this modern mind in his song “Imagine”: “Imagine there’s no heaven... No hell... Imagine all the people, living for today...”

“There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, specially, of Our Lord's own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and it has the support of reason.” C. S. Lewis.

Revelation 20:15, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Introduction from Dr. Kennedy, “Why I believe in hell! No subject in the world is so repugnant to the human mind as this one, yet no subject is of greater importance.

Jesus wept when He contemplated the destruction of Jerusalem. God Himself say, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezekiel 33:11). No Christian can find any joy in the contemplation of the final abode of the impenitent. However, it is our duty as faithful ministers of Jesus Christ to proclaim the whole counsel of God. I believe I would be a false friend to any sinners if I did not warn them, as the Scriptures repeatedly do, of the danger of their condition.

It is a well-known fact that people suppress what they hate and fear. Consequently there are numerous persons who, instead of seriously considering the matter of hell, simply castigate the one who brings it to their attention. Though a minister may have half a dozen degrees, he is still railed upon as an obscurantist (a person who [deliberately](#) prevents the facts or full details of something from becoming known) who is to be ignored if he preaches on the subject. I have found that the arguments of unbelievers consist of one thing: emotionalism, displayed in an outburst of hostility and unwillingness to consider rationally a matter of the greatest importance to their eternal well-being.

Some people seem to be under the delusion that hell has evaporated, or at least that all intelligent people have stopped believing in it. Before continuing in any such ideas, I ask you to consider these words of the great Princeton theologian, A. A. Hodge: ‘The Old Testament was in the hands of the Jews centuries before Christ came. They uniformly understood these Scriptures as teaching that the wicked are to suffer forever.’ The historians Josephus declares that this was also the understanding of the Pharisees of his time. As Christians we have had Scriptures for almost twenty centuries. We read that ‘all the great church fathers, Reformers, and historical churches, with their recensions and translations of the Sacred Scriptures, their liturgies and hymns; all the great evangelical theologians and biblical scholars, with their grammars, dictionaries, commentaries, and classical systems, have uniformly agreed in their understanding of the teaching of Sacred Scriptures as to the endlessness of the future sufferings of all who die impenitent. And this has come to pass against the universal and impetuous current of human fears and sympathies.’

- I. The Life of Jesus and His character.
  - A. One who talked more about hell than any other person in Scripture.
  - B. Did this One who is truth incarnate, who the Holy Son of God, come to implant in the minds of men a fear that would last for more than nineteen centuries of something that is nonexistent?

C. Such a thought is a great smear upon the character of Jesus Christ.

From Dr. Kennedy, "Some people say: 'But God is love! And God will never punish anyone in hell.' It is very dangerous to erect a doctrine on an inaccurate premise. Indeed, the Bible does teach us that God is love, infinitely compassionate love. But the same Bible teaches us that the same God is holy and just and righteous; that He is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, and that He will visit our transgressions with the rod and our iniquity with stripes; that He will by no means clear the guilty.

II. Other views.

A. The universalist.

1. "God is love, in His love, must inevitably receive everyone."
2. This person thinks he knows more about God than God knows about Himself.
3. Here is the blasphemer who would declare that God is some sort of blustering fool who says what He does not mean; that although throughout all of revelation, From Genesis to the end, God declared that the wicked shall die in their sins and not find peace, He now has reversed Himself.

"...You thought that I was altogether like you..." (Psalm 50:21).

B. The secularist.

1. "surely our sins would not deserve such a thing as endless punishment."
2. Secularist, having spent their whole lives scattering people away from Jesus Christ, will be partly responsible for many of these people ending up in hell.

III. The Scriptures.

A. If the effects of our sins are everlasting, then the punishment for our sins will also be everlasting.

B. The main reason we believe in hell is because Jesus Christ declares that it is so.

C. We are told that sinners dwell in "everlasting burnings" (Isaiah 33:14).

1. "Shall never see light" (Psalm 49:19).
2. Are "utterly consumed" (Psalm 73:19).
3. The "fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44).
4. Are everlastingly "dead" (Isaiah 26:14).
5. The "worm in them dies not" (Mark 9:44).
6. Are torn "in pieces while there is none to deliver" (Psalm 7:2).

**In a word, they sink to a death beyond prayer, a condemnation beyond forgiveness, and a doom beyond the reach of Christ.**

D. Etymology (the history of a word or phrase shown by tracing its development and relationships).

1. The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament to mean “eternal” is *olam*.
2. In the New Testament the parallel word is the Greek *aion*, *aionios*—derived from *aei* meaning “always.”

One author has stated that every Hebrew and Greek word used to describe the eternity of the existence of God and eternity of the blessedness of the redeemed in heaven is also used to describe the eternity of the sufferings of the lost in hell. **If the punishment of the wicked is temporal, then there will come a day when God will be extinct, because the same terms are used.** If these terms do not describe eternity, then there is no word in the Hebrew or Greek language that does mean eternity—and this is impossible. Every word that could possibly be used is used.

IV. How long?

William Munsey describes to us something of the meaning of *eternity*, something so often men thrust from their minds: “Eternity cannot be defined. Beginningless and endless, it cannot be measured—its past increased, its future diminished. It has no past, it has no future, it has no ends, it has no middle, it has no parts—an unanalyzable, tremendous unity. If all the mountains of all the worlds were pressing upon the brain, they could not weigh it down more heavily than eternity’s least conception...It is an unoriginated, beginningless, endless, measureless, imperishable, indescribable, undefinable thing. Itself is its only definition. If asked, What is eternity? We can only answer ‘Eternity,’ and in our answer confess our weakness and folly. It is an infinite circle that can never be measured.”

One of the past saints of Bancroft Mission, Burl Burgess, used to say, “If there was a rock one thousand miles long, one thousand miles wide, and one thousand miles high, and if a tiny bird would come every one thousand years to sharpen its beak; when the rock was gone, that would be one day in eternity. And even that does not describe eternity.”

- A. Eternity is an infinite circle.
  1. Because it is infinite, its center is the great undetermined, momentous “now.”
  2. Eternity is an infinite line.
  3. It is a day without morning, a day without an evening.

B. When you have been in hell a hundred billion, trillion eons of centuries, you will not have one less second to be there—to be lost forever.

From Dr. Kennedy, “I have heard the testimony of a man who went to hell. He is a living man, and his testimony is on tape. He has given me his permission to use it in any way that I wish. He described himself as an atheist. He believed neither in soul nor spirit nor angel nor God. ‘When you are dead,’ he said, ‘you are dead like a dog.’ One day he planned to crawl into a hole and pull the top in over him. He did not believe in heaven or hell or God.

But then he did, in a very enlightening way—he died! Not long ago he had a cardiac arrest, and the doctors pronounced him clinically dead. (In the last year or so numerous scientists have reported on

more than five hundred people who have been pronounced clinically dead and have been resuscitated. Whatever that means, we may not wholly know, but the reports that they bring back have convinced scientists that there is life beyond death.) Later he was resuscitated, but he told me that during his “death” he experienced the following: He sank into a realm of darkness, a place of dark shadows—yet still he had a body. He found himself in great agony pushing a huge stone into a pit. (The Bible speaks of a pit.) He was in great pain, and there was nothing he could do to diminish it.

‘If you got shot in the arm,’ he said, ‘you could at least grab your arm and get some slight lessening of pain, but not so with this.’

I asked, ‘Where was it? Was it localized?’

His answer was, ‘No, it was everywhere. I am quite certain that if I had cut my throat I would not have lessened that pain at all.’

When I questioned how severe the pain was, he said, ‘It was worse than anything I have ever experienced in this world.’

I thought perhaps he had never known much pain. I asked, ‘Have you ever really suffered any pain in this world?’

He said, ‘Well, when I was nine years old a freight train ran over my leg and left it hanging by a tendon. Somehow I picked it up, dragged myself to a crossing, and was finally picked up by a man in a car. I never passed out, but my blood squirted all over his windshield as he drove me to a hospital. I was never unconscious.’

‘How did that pain compare to the time when the doctor said you were dead?’ I asked.

‘It was insignificant,’ he answered. ‘I wouldn’t even compare it.’

I told him, ‘I once burned my hand rather severely and experienced a pain unlike anything I have ever known before or since. Did you ever burn yourself?’

He said, ‘Yes, I knocked a can of gasoline off a shelf over a candle onto my leg and set my remaining leg on fire. As a result I spent several weeks in a hospital.’ He raised his pants leg and showed me the scars.

I said, ‘I know of nothing in this world that compares to the pain of burning. How did the pain you experienced when you died compare with that?’

He answered, ‘It was one thousand times worse than when my leg was on fire! I tried every way I knew to explain that away, but everything dissolved before my attempts to do it. I did not believe in hell before, and I did not want to believe in it then. On the face of this earth, no matter what you did to me, I don’t think you could experience the pain that I experienced in that hospital.’

I asked, ‘What do you think that was?’

‘Why, I feel that it definitely had to be something other than on this earth, so the only place I can think of is that there must be a hell, and I was in it.’ He told me that when he thought about that after he got out of the hospital, he began to tremble with an uncontrollable trembling.

Hell is real! He believed it did not exist at all, just as some who are reading this believe. He thought it was a myth. He did not believe Christ. He did not believe God; he did not believe the Bible. But he died, and he believes it now! Tragically, some will only believe it when they experience it—when it will be too late.”

C. If the Bible teaches anything at all, it is that there is an everlasting too late—that there will come a moment when it will eternally too late, when the door of grace will have slammed shut forever.

## Lesson 6

## “Why I believe in Moral Absolutes”

## Introduction 1:

Yes, the Mosaic law has been fulfilled by Jesus and we are no longer under that system; but we are not “law-less.” We have the inward witness, guide, and comfort of the Holy Spirit. He has come into every heart of the Believer. He is not “with us” simply to make us feel good or to lead us in life. He is also there to transform us into the image of Jesus and “witness” in us as to the right and wrong ways of life.

To believe in moral absolutes is not legalism. While in a college philosophy class, “*The Philosophy of Ethics*”, the professor told us that there were no absolutes; nothing of which we could be sure. I asked, “Are you sure.” She replied, “Absolutely!” Hmmmmm?

Isaiah 5:20&21, “ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!”

The absolute basics of life are: “Are we God centered, or Man centered?”

## Introduction 2—from Dr. Kennedy:

Even the most cursory examination of the age in which we live will reveal an enormous decay and disintegration in the moral standards of the Western world. The evidence is everywhere. Many astute observers believe there no hope for our civilization unless something is done about it.

The severance from life of moral ethics in the sense of any absolutes, as brought into our education system by John Dewey, and other naturalist (naturalism believes that there is nothing in the universe but nature), has brought a distressing situation to our world. In every first sentence of the very first paragraph of the introduction to his monumental book titled *The Closing of American Mind*, Dr. Allan Bloom, Professor in the Committee of Social Thought at the University of Chicago, says this: “There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of. Almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative.”

It’s true. Virtually all our high school students have learned that there are no absolutes, that truth is relative.

To say there are no absolutes, however, is to say there is no God. God is the ultimate absolute, and what He says is the ultimate and absolute truth. (Malachi 3:6, “For I *am* the LORD, I do not change..”). And therein lies the moral quandary of the modern age.

## I. The problem

Ezekiel 16:49, “Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”—SELF.

Judges 21:25, “In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.”—SELF.

A. Situation of society.

1. Over the last several decades, moral standards in our country have sunk to alarming depths. Discussion of any sort of illicit sexual act was formerly considered shocking even between unmarried people; now adultery has become a commonplace subject for magazines, movies, and morning and afternoon TV serials. Homosexuality occupies the scene, but the more current obsession with bestiality threatens to usurp its place.

2. Every television program, every newscast, every magazine, every novel, every motion picture is based on some ethical presupposition, derived from among a variety of ethical systems.

3. Ethics (moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity).

a. Two great divisions in ethical systems.

- One ethical system is based upon revelation, an ethical system God has revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments—it is God given.
- The other main division, called speculative ethics—one that is invented by man. It is humanistic and autonomous (having the freedom to govern itself or control its own affairs.)

**It comes from below upward, whereas the other comes from above.**

**From Dr. Kennedy, “People will say that things are always changing, and that is certainly true. What was true ten years ago may not be true today. That is true in the morals of people, but it is not true with God or with revelational ethics. God is immutable, unchangeable, and His truth changes not. It doesn’t matter if everyone in the world joins hands and votes unanimously that God’s truth is false, it still remains true. It remains true whether I believe in it or I don’t believe in it. Whether you accept or reject it does not alter the fact that God’s truth does exist and never changes.”**

b. Speculative realm of ethics.

- First of all, there is naturalism, which begins with the premise that is totally nature.
- Then there is idealism. This begins from a totally opposite premise: that there is a basic immaterial reality, a spiritual, reality, a rational reality, if you will, that is primary, preexistent to matter and of much more importance than matter.—Basically, a Pantheistic system (Pantheism is the belief that God and the



universe are the same things rather than separate things. In other words, God is all, and all is God.)

- Egoism. From the word *ego*, which means: “I will seek that which is good for me. A form of egoistic ethic says: The important thing is simple for me to consider whether a certain action will bring pleasure to me.

**None of them are as well-rounded as the scriptural system, which covers all of the basic needs of mankind and society.**

B. Many systems contain conflict between the religious and the ethical.

1. Religious—attempting to be “right with God” for and by oneself.

2. Ethical—conforming to what one thinks is the right way of living, which changes from culture to culture.

From Dr. Kennedy, “The most popular form of psychology today, behavioristic psychology, is completely deterministic. Man is determined by what he eats, by all things that impinge upon him; not merely his physical body but his ideas and his morality are determined by his environment. Therefore, changing his environment will change the man. This deterministic system is so prevalent that it controls much of the thinking in our society today. Most people do not even realize what kind of system they are dealing with or why people argue as they do; for example, that all we need to do is clean up a slum in order to change people for the better. Recent studies have shown that the environment of a person is by no means the crucial factor in the type of life he or she lives.”

a. Ethical aspects.

- The only matter of importance is that the motive must be right.
- If anyone is sincere, then it must be right. It doesn't matter what religion one embraces, as long as one is sincere.
- The “New Morality” or situational ethics: The only thing that matters is our motive, which must be love.

b. Relativistic morals.

- We no longer talk about morals, we talk about “values.”
- Every person has some authority to decide what is good or bad for him or her, what is of value and what is not of value.
- Since our values and morals do not come from God, they must come from some source that influences us, and that source is cultural.
- So, these values, these morals, are relativistic, individual, subjective, and culturally induced.

During the Nuremberg War Trials after World War II, Nazi leaders were brought before that court and charged with all manner of crimes, including the slaughtering of millions of Jews and other people. What was their defense? It was a clever one. The Supreme Court of Germany had declared that Jews were nonpersons. So, these indicted Nazi leaders said, “We have done nothing wrong. We acted according to our own culture, according to our own morals, according to our own laws. We were told that they could be killed. Who are you to come from another culture, another society, and impose your morals on us?”

The Allied attorneys were thrown for a fifty-yard loss. They didn’t know what to say. If there are no absolutes, if everything is relativistic, if everything is culturally induced and we have no authority to impose our culture upon another, how dare we say that the Nazis were wrong for killing millions of people. The lawyers were so taken aback that after huddling for some time, they finally decided to retreat. Since they apparently were not willing to retreat to the moral law of God, they retreated to “natural law,” which has been held through many centuries. Although it is less precise, more vague, it nevertheless still has some moral content to it. The lawyers appealed to natural laws, and it was on that basis that the Nazis were convicted.

C. Three things about each of these systems.

1. All of the speculative systems are just that; they are speculations. They are rationalistic. They reject revelation and base the whole weight of their support simply upon the conceptions of the human mind. Therefore, their limitations should be obvious at once. We don’t live our lives relativistically because we live in an “absolute” world.

2. The systems are all man-centered, and man becomes his own god. In every one of these systems, it is man who will decide what he is going to do. Thus, God is banished from his universe, and the Creator has no right to tell the creature what to do. Man has become a law unto himself, the autonomous man.

3. All human ethical systems are a willful rebellion against the Almighty God. They attempt to allow man to live a life not controlled by God, but still justify himself as an ethical and moral being.

**All human systems try to find man’s good apart from God, and in this they fall to the ground. Our highest good is to know God, to be like Him, to love Him, to glorify Him, to enjoy Him forever!**

II. The solution.

A. Realize we can’t “sanctify sinners.” Change has to come from the heart of a “new created being” and the continuing changing of the heart by the Holy Spirit.

B. Foundation of prayer.

1. John Wesley’s most famous quote, “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can. **God does nothing except in response to believing prayer.**”

2. C. H. Spurgeon—You are before the Lord; let your words be few, but let your heart be fervent...As well could you expect a plant to grow without air and water as to expect your heart to grow without prayer and faith...We know not what prayer cannot do...I would rather teach one man to

pray than ten men to preach...Prayer girds human weakness with divine strength, turns human folly into heavenly wisdom, and gives to troubled mortals the peace of God...

3. A dear friend of mine, after he had repented of moral failure and had been restored to a "right relationship" with God confessed, "My demise began when I "learned how to preach" and stopped seeking the Lord in prayer and fellowship."

C. "Being the church and not merely "going to church."

The early church had "turned the world upside down." Then, in 330 A.D., Constantine built what has been known as the first house built exclusively for worship. The church began "going to church" instead of "being the church." What followed was 1000 years known as the dark ages. The church "became the church" again in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when mighty men and women of God began to preach on the streets—they took the Gospel outside of the four walls. While the church is taught to gather corporately to worship, to learn, and to grow, our greatest work "as the church" is done in the marketplace.

D. Three branches of the Kingdom of God.

1. The Family. The home is the heart of God. Fathers and mothers teaching their children the "untold riches" of the Kingdom of God. Instilling into them the truths of the Scriptures.

2. The Church. The church is the spirit of God. We come together to learn, to worship with other believers, to be accountable to our brothers and sisters. Then we go into the marketplace with the love of God in our hearts.

3. Society. Society has the sword of God. I would to God that believers would occupy every public and political office. That Believers would make and enforce laws in society.

E. That we understand that the Love of God alone does not make us "right with Him." The Love of God sent Jesus to the Cross, and the Love of Jesus for the Father, kept Him there. The substitutionary death of Jesus on the Cross, and our acceptance of Jesus as Savior is what makes us "right with God."

## Lesson 7

## “Why I Believe in Christ”

Colossians 2:9, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;”

Introduction:

Why do people believe in Christ? Is it because of some emotion, some peculiar predisposition, some desire to believe with one’s heart what one knows with one’s mind not to be true? Is there any real evidence?

**Christianity is the only religion in the world that is based upon historic evidences.** The Bible never calls us to blind faith in those things that have been established by evidence. The evidence for Jesus Christ is absolutely overwhelming. No one can disbelieve in Christ because of a lack evidence.

I. Why we believe in Jesus Christ.

A. The great issue that this *world struggle* is all about is whether or not we believe in Jesus Christ.

B. For those who are honest seekers after the truth there is abundant evidence.

1. He is the founder of the largest religion in the history of the world.

2. Christianity is twice as large as its closest “competitor.”

3. Today there are one billion three hundred and twenty million people who claim to be Christians.

C. What shall we say about Jesus?

1. Some have said He was just a myth; He never really existed.

2. **Historian J. Gilchrist Lawson says: “The legendary, or mythical, theory of Christ’s existence is not held by any one worthy of the name of scholar. The historical evidences of Christ’s existence are some much greater than those in support of any other event in ancient history; no candid scholar could reject them without also renouncing his belief in every event recorded in ancient history.”**

II. How do we know that He existed? Is it simply because the Bible tells us so? That *is* one reason. We have four biographies of Christ in the Scripture, and the testimony of the Gospel historians is far more accurate and detailed than that of any secular historian, as we have already discussed in previous lessons.

A. Some people suppose that, other than the Gospels, no ancient writer mentions Jesus Christ—they are quite wrong.

1. Among the secular historians and writers of antiquity who refer to Christ and Christianity are Tacitus, the Roman historian; Suetonius; Pliny the younger; Epictetus; Lucian; Aristides; Galenus; Lampridius; DioCassius; Hinnerius; Libanius; Ammianus; Marcellinus; Eunapius; Zosimus.

2. Others have written whole books against Christianity, including Lucian, Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian the Apostate. Numerous others, including Jewish writers, have written about Jesus Christ.

B. So abundant is the testimony to Christ that Dr. Philip Schaff says: “Standing on this rock, I feel safe against all the attacks of infidelity. The person of Christ is to me the greatest and surest of all facts; as certain as my own personal existence.”

C. The report of Pontius Pilate to Tiberius Caesar states: “And him Herod and Archelaus and Philip, Annas and Caiaphas, with all the people, delivered to me, making a great uproar against me that I should try him [Christ]. I therefore ordered him to be crucified, having first scourged him, and having found against him no cause of evil accusation or deeds. And at the time he was crucified there was darkness over all the world, the sun being darkened at mid-day, and the stars appearing, but in them there appeared no lustre; and the moon, as if turned into blood, failed in her light.”

D. Another secular writer, Thallus, in A.D. 52, writes about the sun’s failure to give light from noon until three o’clock and says that this must have been due to an eclipse. However, we know that Christ was crucified at the time of the Passover, which was the time of the full moon, and there cannot be an eclipse of the sun at the time of the full moon.

E. F. F. Burce, Rylands professor of biblical criticism and exegesis at the University of Manchester, says: “Some writers may toy with the fancy of a ‘Christ-myth,’ but they do not do so on the ground of historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic (self-evident or unquestionable) for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the ‘Christ-myth’ theories.”

F. Tacitus, discussing Nero’s attempt to cover up his burning of Rome, wrote this: “Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius; but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also.”

**From Dr. Kennedy: “Pliny the younger, who was putting Christians to death—men and women and boys and girls—finally wrote the emperor, Trajan, seeking counsel. He wondered if he should kill Christians or just certain ones. In the same letter he says: ‘They affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt, or their error, was that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bound themselves to a solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds.’ So we find from Pliny that the Christians believed that Jesus Christ was God, and they met early one day each week and worshiped Him.**

**Julian the Apostate endeavored to destroy Christianity. He wrote a whole book against it, but in that book, instead of destroying Christianity, he *affirms* that Jesus was born in the reign of Augustus at the time of the taxing made in Judea by Cyrenius. He also confirms the fact that the Christian religion began its rise in**

**the times of the emperors Tiberius and Claudius. He affirms the authenticity of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as the authentic sources of the Christian religion. This same Julian went to Jerusalem to disprove the Bible, but he failed. When, unknowingly, he destroyed the wall of Babylon, he confirmed the biblical prophecy. When he finally came to his death, pointing his dagger up to the sky at Jesus, he gathered his blood after being wounded on the battlefield, threw it into the air, and said, "This has conquered, O Galilean." Julian left behind no trace of the paganism he endeavored to rebuild. All of his efforts evaporated before the power of the Galilean.**

III. Fulfilled prophecies about Christ.

A. There are 333 prophecies in the Old Testament that deal with the promised Messiah, and of those 333 texts, 456 specific details of His life and coming are indeed delineated (describe or portray something) precisely.

B. One of the purposes for God's giving the Old Testament to the Jewish people was to be able to identify the Messiah when He came from among them.

### **Prophecies are usually vague by nature, not the ones in the Word of God.**

C. Messianic prophecies

Imagine that in Waco, Texas, ancient scrolls are uncovered which were written 600 to 1,000 years ago.

Some were written before the discovery of America by Columbus, and all were written before the American Revolution. The scrolls predict that someone in our generation will be born who is of the direct lineage of George Washington. This person would be descended from a long line of important founders of America, all of whom were known to be from Virginia. The scrolls further reveal that the person would be born in Tarrant County, Texas in the town of Azle. Miraculously, his mother would be a virgin. At the time of his birth, dignitaries from other countries would mysteriously know about him and would come to worship him and present him with precious gifts, believing he was a special envoy from God.

In addition, our imaginary prophecies would also reveal that as a result of this child being born, local ruling tyrants would try to murder him. This would result in the deaths of many other innocent children whose mothers would weep over their loss. To protect this special child from the tyrants, his father would take him to another country, later bringing him back. This future child would grow up to lead a religious revolution.

Now, imagine that all this came to be true in our lifetime, fulfilling the predictions of these centuries-old scrolls. As astronomically unlikely as the creation, preservation and fulfillment of these written prophecies might seem, this is a fair parallel to what we have in the ancient Hebrew Scripture prophecies about Jesus!

1. He would come from the Seed of the woman—Genesis 3:15.
2. He would come from the line of Abraham—Genesis 18:17&18.

3. He would come from the house of David—Jeremiah 23:5&6.
4. He would be called Immanuel—Isaiah 7:14.
5. He would have a forerunner who would proclaim His coming—Malachi 3:1.
6. He would be born in Bethlehem Ephratah of Judea *not* Bethlehem Zebulun of Israel—Micah 5:3.
7. He would be called out of Egypt—Hosea 11:1.
8. Bethlehem would suffer a massacre of infants upon the king’s hearing of Jesus’ birth—Jeremiah 31:15.
9. He would be called a Nazarene (not a Nazarite)—Isaiah 11:1.

#### IV. The unique character of Jesus.

From Dr. Kennedy: “Through studying many biographies, I have found something that all historians have discovered—the more you look at any human being, the more the luster grows dim. No matter how great the hero may have been, if you examine him closely, you see his feet of clay; you see all his frailties and foibles. Dr. Schaff says that all human greatness diminishes on closer inspection; but Christ’s character grows more pure, sacred, and lovely the better we know Him.”

- A. There never has been anyone like Jesus Christ.
  1. The more His life is studied, the more impressive it is.
  2. Only those people who are ignorant of His life could ever say anything to criticize it.

When His life is examined, He is seen as the altogether lovely One; He is the incomparable Christ; He is the Crystal Christ. As Sidney Lanier said, “What is there in Him that we would find to forgive? He is the One who never did anything amiss; the only One with whom no has ever been able to find any fault; the One who could say, ‘Which of you convinceth me of sin?’ He is the perfect man, the perfect example of humanity.

B. Sometimes people say, “Only ignorant people would believe that Christ was a great person.” Listen to some of the most brilliant minds that have ever lived.

1. Jean Jacques Rousseau, one the great intellects of France and a great opponent of Christianity, later in his life admitted in his *Emile* that there could be no comparison between Socrates and Christ, as little as between a sage and God.

2. Goethe, that sophisticated genius of Germany, said of Jesus that He was “the Divine Man,” “the Holy One.”

3. Jean Paul Friedrich Richter said, “He is the purest among the mighty, the mightiest among the pure.”

Ernest Renan, the great orientalist, linguist, French scholar, and critic, who tried to tear the Bible to pieces, after all his attempts later called Christ “a man of colossal dimensions”; “the incomparable man,

to whom the universal conscience has decreed the title of Son of God, and that with justice, since he caused religion to take a step in advance incomparably greater than any other in the past, and probably any yet to come." Renan closed his *Life of Jesus* with the remarkable concession: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed." Rousseau also said, "Shall we suppose the evangelical history a mere fiction? Indeed, it bears no marks of fiction.... On the contrary, the history of Socrates, which no one presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ."

4. William Shakespeare, perhaps the greatest literary genius of all time, wrote in his will: "I commend my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the merits of Jesus Christ my Savior to be made partaker of Life everlasting."

Leo Tolstoy, the great genius of Russian letters who once was an atheist of the wildest sort, said this: "For thirty-five years of my life I was, in the proper acceptation of the word a nihilist (a person who believes that life is meaningless and rejects all religious and moral principles)—not a revolutionary socialist, but a man who believed in nothing. Five years ago, my faith came to me. I believed in the doctrine of Jesus, and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation...Life and death ceased to be evil; instead of despair I tasted joy and happiness that death could not take away."

Conclusion:

**From Dr. Kennedy: "None of these things will do. Jesus Christ is infinitely more than all of that! He is the Divine Creator of the universe, the One without whom nothing was made that has been made; who came into this world to die for the human creatures' sin. He is God incarnate! He is the One who declared that 'before Abraham was, I am' (John 8:58); the One who said: 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work' (John 5:17); the One who said, 'I and my Father are one' (John 10:30) ...**

**All of these reasons why I believe in Jesus Christ. But that is not how I first came to know Him. I first came to know Him when I saw Him lifted up before my eyes as the Divine Savior who loved me and was dying for my sins—this One whose brow was pierced; whose hands were skewered to a cross; the One who said, 'Come unto me...and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). I saw there the lover of my soul, that One who loved me more than father or mother or wife or child, that One who will love me everlastingly—the only One who even went to hell for me. I remember slipping off my chair onto my knees and inviting Him into my life. Why? Because I was moved by the Spirit of God and irresistibly drawn to Him. And thus, I came to know and to believe in the living Christ, *my Divine Redeemer.*"**



## Lesson 8

## “Why I Believe in the Virgin Birth”

Luke 1:26-35, “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!” 29 But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 “And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” 34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” 35 And the angel answered and said to her, “*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”

Introduction from Dr. Kennedy:

I want to assure you right off that I do not believe in the Virgin Birth and hope that none of you do.

Did that get your attention?

Those are not my words. Those are the words spoken from the magnificent Riverside Church in New York City more than a half century ago by the Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick, leader and popularizer of the liberal theological movement in America.

For some reason, the Virgin Birth of Christ has come under greater attack than any other miracle in the New Testament. Not too long ago, a group calling themselves the Jesus Seminar (The Jesus Seminar was a group of about 50 biblical criticism scholars and 100 laymen founded in 1985 by Robert Funk that originated under the auspices of the Westar Institute. The seminar was very active through the 1980s and 1990s, and into the early 21st century) grabbed headlines. The group consisted of a few dozen of the most liberal radical Bible theologians in America. Their purpose was to vote, using colored pebbles, on their opinion of the truth of the Gospel stories. This pebble-based research of theirs is really no research at all. It is merely an expression of their unbelief. They voted, for instance, that the Virgin Birth of Christ never occurred, that the visit of the wise men was fiction, and that the flight into Egypt was a flight of fancy.

However, I believe that the Virgin Birth is not only a fact but also a foundational fact of our faith.

The more deceptive kind of skeptics will not so much attack the Virgin Birth’s truth directly but suggest that it really doesn’t matter. One day, I sat down to consider what difference it does make whether the Virgin Birth happened, and here are the differences I discovered:

1. If Jesus were not born of a virgin, then the New Testament narratives are proved false and unreliable.

2. Mary is stained with the sin of unchastity. Unchastity in a woman, under the Mosaic Law meant death. Deuteronomy 22:20&21, “But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman, 21 “then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall **stone her to death** with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father’s house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.”

3. Jesus was mistaken about His paternity because He repeatedly declared that He was the Son of God, and that God was His Father.

4. Christ was not born of the “seed of the woman”; therefore, the ancient promise given in the Garden of Eden that the seed of the woman would destroy the head of the serpent is unfulfilled.

5. Jesus was, therefore, an illegitimate child, not the peerless Son of God.

6. He is consequently not the God-man.

7. He was a sinner just like the rest of us.

8. As a sinner, He cannot be the Divine Redeemer, because the sacrifice must be perfect.

9. Therefore, we have no Savior at all.

10. We are yet in our sins and without forgiveness.

11. We have no hope after death.

12. There is no mediator between God and man.

13. Christ should not have prayed, “Father, forgive them” but rather, “Father, forgive us,” because He was a sinner just like the rest of us.

14. Last, if this miracle of the Virgin Birth is denied, where shall we draw the line? Should we not deny them all?

I. Does it make a difference?

A. If the Virgin Birth of Christ is not true, it totally subverts the entire Christian gospel.

B. It destroys the whole meaning of Jesus Christ as a Divine Redeemer.

C. It robs us of all hope of salvation.

II. Why do some people not believe?

A. Some deny the Virgin Birth because they deny miracles.

1. They would say that the only reason people believed in a virgin birth back then was that the ancient people were ignorant of science.

2. True, Joseph was not as acquainted with childbirth and conception as the average gynecologist today.

But Joseph was not a naïve man. When he discovered that Mary was “with child,” what did he do? Did he say, “Oh, it’s probably a virgin birth. It’s no doubt the Holy Spirit who has done this thing. Being such

an ignorant old fool, I certainly don't believe that she slept with anyone else." No, instead, he determined to put her away privately, having concluded that she had been unchaste. It took a visitation from the Angel Gabriel to convince him of the concept of a virgin birth.

B. Some people reject the Virgin Birth because, although they believe in some miracles, in the case of the Virgin Birth they claim many other books in the Scriptures are silent about it. This is an argument called "the argument from silence."

The late Dr. Harry Rimmer, a well-educated Presbyterian minister, once had quite an encounter on the floor of a certain Presbytery with a rather radical minister in the Presbytery. A young man was being examined who had proclaimed that he did not believe in the Virgin Birth. When some of the ministers began to question the young man more severely, an older minister stood up and said he hoped they would not make big point of the because he did not accept it, either.

"Why not?" someone asked.

"Because it is only found on two pages of the New Testament. Matthew and Luke are the only ones who ever mention it. In all the writing of Paul, he never introduces the question of the Virgin Birth."

Dr. Rimmer rose to his feet and said, "Tell us then, what do you teach and preach?"

The older minister answered, "The Sermon on the Mount. That's enough for anyone."

Dr. Rimmer said it was not enough for him, because "he didn't believe in the Sermon on the Mount."

That hit like a bombshell in the midst of the Presbytery.

"Why ever not?" asked the old minister.

"Because it only occurs on two pages of the New Testament and Matthew and Luke are the only Gospels who mention it," retorted Dr. Rimmer.

The old minister was taken aback by that line of reasoning, the same he had been using, of course, to negate the idea of the Virgin Birth of Christ.

1. The argument of silence.

a. It's true that Mark never mentions the Virgin Birth of Christ. It is also true that Mark never mentions the birth of Christ at all.

b. The same strained logic of the "argument from silence" could say that because Paul did not mention any of the miracles or parables of Jesus, then obviously Paul never believed that Jesus worked miracles or told parables.

2. The "argument from silence" has been long refuted by anyone who thinks clearly.

C. Many reject the Virgin Birth because stories of miraculous and virgin births are found in heathen legends.

1. Greek mythology teaches that Zeus, the Greek god, came into Alcmena and produced Hercules

2. Vish, in his eighth incarnation or avatar, came out as the virgin-born Krishna.
3. Buddha is supposed to have been born of his mother, Maya, in a virgin birth.
4. Augustus Caesar, Nero, and Alexander the Great claimed to have had virgin births.

5. A closer look.

a. In the case of Zeus and Hercules, we discover what we see among the Greek gods all the time. The Greek gods are simply men blown up large with all of their sins and foibles, cohabitating with human beings. Behind each such story is lust and lasciviousness of the “gods” in their desire for some fair mortal woman.

b. In the case of Vishnu, he had first, supposedly, been incarnated as a fish, a turtle, a boar, a lion, and other bizarre things.

c. As for Buddha, his mother says that a six-tusked white elephant with red veins came into her side and produced him.

d. In the case of Augustus Caesar, he claims that his mother, Olympia, was impregnated by a serpent. Alexander the Great made the same claim—that his father was a snake.

#### Protoevangelium

(Genesis 3:15 is known as the protoevangelium. This is a compound of two Greek words, *protos* meaning "first" and *evangelion* meaning "good news" or "gospel". Thus, the verse is commonly referred to as **the first mention in the Bible of the "good news" of salvation.**)

From Dr. Kennedy

“Let’s put an ax to the root of the tree of this argument (that miraculous and virgin births are found in heathen legends). The thrust of the argument is that these stories predate the story of the Virgin Birth of Christ found in Matthew and Luke, and that the two Gospel writers stole them from these earlier stories. But that is not the case. The fact of the matter is that the story of the Virgin Birth is found in Isaiah 7:14, where God says He will give them a sign: ‘Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,’ the fulfillment of which is described by Matthew. This was seven hundred years before Christ, which predates all but a few of these pagan religion stories.

But let’s go back farther to discover the Protoevangelium, *the first Gospel*, that wondrous promise given by God to our first parents in Eden. They sinned by disobeying God. Sin entered and offered nothing but death by sin. In the midst of that stygian (extremely dark, gloomy, or forbidding) blackness there appeared a single star, a star of prophetic hope, *a star of promise*, the Protoevangelium. God said that the seed of the woman would destroy the head of the serpent, even though the serpent would wound the heel of the seed of the woman. In all of Scripture, there is no other person called the “seed of the woman,” which points to a virgin birth. Everyone is begotten by man, as we can see in the chronologies of Christ found in Matthew.

**It is even written large by God in the stars. All twelve signs of the Zodiac are taken from Genesis 3:15—the Protoevangelium. They are all pictures of the seed of the woman coming from Virgo, the virgin, who will destroy the head of the serpent.**

But then, in the time of the rule of Babylon, when polytheism spread throughout the pagan world, the hopeful story of the Protoevangelium was distorted into various pagan gods of antiquity, and the true meaning was lost. God had written it large. The gospel, with its core truth of the Virgin Birth, was preached unto all the world under heaven, even in the stars. It passed, albeit in distorted ways, into virtually every mythology of the nations of the world. **The pagan stories were simply perverted recollections of the great truth that God revealed from the beginning in the Protoevangelium. So, rather than the heathen legends being the source of the biblical concept of the Virgin Birth of Christ, it is the biblical concept of the Virgin Birth preannounced in the Protoevangelium in Genesis 3 that is the source of all the pagan mythological views. Instead of refuting the concept of the Virgin Birth, they establish it.**

III. Science demands that every effect has a sufficient and adequate cause.

A. In a world where the front pages of the newspapers all over the world, every day, morning and night, proclaim the sinfulness of man, they are only underscoring the truth of Genesis 3. Man fell!

B. The Virgin Birth.

1. The uniqueness of Christ demands a unique birth.

2. The Virgin Birth is true because He arose from the dead.

a. The resurrection of Christ is the most firmly attested fact of antiquity.

b. All the evidence to the resurrection of Christ is evidence for the Virgin

Birth of Jesus.

Why? Because the Scripture tells us that when God raised Him from the dead, He put His approval upon the atonement of Jesus Christ and declared that the sacrifice had been accepted. The sacrifice would not have been accepted if Christ were not pure, and He would not have been pure if He were born a sinner like all of us.

C. Mary.

1. She could have stopped the torture and the agony of her son's death on the cross.

2. How? He was crucified for one reason: He claimed that God was His Father.

Conclusion from Dr. Kennedy

“Jesus is the virgin-born, divine Son of God, the Redeemer of men. And what we need to ask ourselves today, is whether the virgin-born One has been born in us. It is still and eternally true that “though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, if He be not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.”

## Lesson 9

## “Why I Believe in the Resurrection”

Acts 1:3, “to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

Introduction from Dr. Kennedy:

Since the beginning of time, men and women have responded to the death of loved ones with a cry like that of Job: ‘If a man die, shall he live again?’ (Job 14:14). Human philosophy and pagan religions have been able to answer with no more than a question mark, a wish, or a vague hope.

The great genius of Greek philosophy, Plato, was asked: ‘Shall we live again?’ His response: ‘I hope so, but no man may know.’ The tombs of Muhammad or Buddha or Confucius are occupied, but the tomb of Christ is empty to this day.

Why then do we believe in the resurrection of Christ, this most important of all Christian doctrines, beside which all other doctrines are relatively insignificant? It is by the Resurrection that Christ is declared the Son of God with power, and it is by the Resurrection that His atoning sacrifice is declared to be accepted by God. This is the center of the Christian faith. With it everything stands or falls. Therefore, all skeptics through nineteen centuries have aimed their largest guns at the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ has been examined more carefully than the evidence for any other fact of history! It has been weighed and considered by the greatest of scholars, among them Simon Greenleaf, the Royal professor of law at Harvard from 1833 to 1848 who helped bring Harvard Law School to preeminence and who has been called the greatest authority on legal evidences in the history of the world. When Greenleaf turned his mind upon the resurrection of Christ and focused upon it the light of all the laws of evidence, he concluded that the resurrection of Christ was a reality, that it is a historical event, and that anyone who examined the evidence for it honestly would be convinced this was the case. So it was with Frank Morison, a British lawyer who set out to write a book repudiating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He wrote his book, but it was not the book he set out to write. As he examined the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, this skeptical lawyer found it so overwhelming he was forced to accept it and become a believer. The book he did write, titled *Who Moved the Stone?* sets forth the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, and its first chapter is called ‘The Book That Refused to Be Written.’ Lew Wallace also set out to write a book disproving the deity of Christ and His resurrection and ended up writing a famous book defending it. That book was titled *Ben Hur*.

The evidence for the resurrection of Christ, in the minds of those who have time to examine, is very, very significant. I have met many people who do not believe in the resurrection of Christ, but I have never met one person who has read even a single book on the evidences for the Resurrection who did not believe it.”

I. The Evidences.

A. There is the fact of the Lord’s day.

1. For thousands of years the Hebrew people had held their Sabbath doctrine.

2. Early Christians who were Jews changing the day of worship from the seventh to the first day!

What could account for their abandoning something to which they had held so tenaciously? Nothing other than such a monumental event as the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which took place on the first day of the week: His appearance to His disciples on the first day of the week; and the outpouring of His Spirit on the church at Pentecost on the first day of the week. So, we read that it was on the first day of the week that the disciples of Jesus Christ met to worship Him.

B. Easter.

1. This was replacement of the Jewish festival of the Passover.
2. Why did the Jews who held the Passover to be the most significant event in the history of their nation abandon it in favor of the celebration of Easter, which was the festival of festivals among the Christians? The greeting was: "Christ is risen!" And the response: "Christ is risen indeed!"

C. Christian Sacraments.

1. Point not only to the death and suffering of Christ but also to His resurrection and power.
2. These can be traced back in unbroken succession to the very time of the death of Jesus Christ.

D. Christian Art.

In the catacombs of Rome, from the time of persecutions, we find carved into the walls representations of the resurrection of Christ as a part of the very earliest beliefs of the Christians.

E. Christian Hymns.

In the earliest days of the Christian church, hymns were sung to the resurrected Jesus Christ.

F. The Christian Church.

1. Many people do not make the connection between the church and the Resurrection, but all scholars have.
2. The Christian church is the largest institution that exists or has ever existed in the history of the world.
3. More than one billion three hundred million people this day profess to worship Jesus Christ as the living and risen Son of God.

As someone said: "The Grand Canyon was not formed by an Indian dragging a stick." Neither was an institution the size of the Christian church brought to pass by the daydreams of idle dreamers in days gone by. It is known by all historians that the Christian church can be traced back to the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 30, the time of the death and resurrection of Christ.



It is an indisputable fact of history, not faith, that the largest institution in the history of the world began in A.D. 30 in Jerusalem when the apostles began to preach that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. **The very heart and substance of the message of the early Christians was that Christ was risen from the dead.**

The first message delivered at Pentecost was about the resurrection of Christ: about the prophecies that went before it in the Old Testament; about the fact that they had crucified the Lord of glory and God had raised Him from the dead; about the fact that they were the witnesses of these things; about the fact that the risen Christ had now poured out His spirit; and about the fact that because He was risen, He could grant remission of sins to those who would believe in Him.

All the Scriptures and the testimony of unbelievers and hostile enemies of Christianity as well declare that the church was spread everywhere because of this teaching that Christ had risen from the dead. It is a fact that the church of Jesus Christ came into being because the apostles declared that He rose from the dead.

## II. Three Alternatives are Possible.

- A. This was fraud, and the apostles lied.
- B. They were deluded, deceived, and in error.
- C. **Christ did rise from the dead.**

Only a handful of theories have been propounded by skeptics, atheists, and unbelievers who have turned their greatest guns upon the Resurrection. All one has to do to be even more convinced about the resurrection of Christ is to examine these theories to see how vain they are. *The Cause and Cure of Infidelity* by Dr. David Nelson records that as young man in college and graduate school he lost his faith but was still upset by an uneasy conscience. In order to bolster himself in his unbelief, he read the writing of the all the "greatest" atheists. He had enough mental acumen to see that their arguments were so fatuous and empty that they would not hold water. This led to his conversion to Jesus Christ.

## III. Holy Confrontations.

- A. Confronting the fulfillment of prophecies in the Old Testament.

1. Psalm 16:10, "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." WITH Acts 2:27-31, "For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' 29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

2. Hosea 6:1&2, "Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight."

3. Isaiah 53:10, "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand."

B. Confronting the predictions of Christ Himself.

1. Mark 9:30&31, "Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it*. 31 For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

2. John 2:18-22, "So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

C. Confronting the graveclothes.

D. Confronting the testimony of witnesses.

E. Confronting the twelve different occasions when Christ appeared to people.

F. Confronting the five hundred people who saw Him risen.

G. Confronting the tremendous transformation of the apostles from fearful, timid cowards to bold proclaimers of the Gospel.

**Confronting Peter, the apostle, who one day was afraid of a little maiden, was a few days later confronting the whole Sanhedrin, affirming to them that he could not but declare that which he had seen and heard.**

H. Confronting the faithfulness, the character, the suffering, and the death of these witnesses, most of whom sealed their testimony with their blood.

From Dr. Kennedy, "This is a vitally important fact. In the history of psychology, it has never been known that a person was willing to give up life for what he or she knew to be a lie. I used to wonder why it was that God allowed the apostles and all the early Christians to go through such suffering, such tremendous unbelievable tortures. The foundations of Christianity are so established that they are absolutely unshakable today. Paul Little said, 'Men will die for what they believe to be true, though it may actually be false. They do not, however, die for what they know is a lie.'"

I. Confronting Christ's ascension.

J. Confronting Paul, the apostle, -- from Saul, the persecutor and murderer of Christians, to Paul, the greatest apostle in the history of Christianity.

IV. The various theories that try to explain away the Resurrection.

A. Fraud.

1. This was the earliest theory to be set forth.

2. Matthew 28:13&14, “saying, ‘Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’ 14 ‘And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’”

3. In the entire history of jurisprudence there has never under any circumstances been a witness who has been allowed to testify to what transpired while he was asleep— “While we were asleep, the apostles came.”

B. Lawyer Frank Morison says: “We have to account not merely for the enthusiasm of its friends (of the church), but the paralysis of its enemies and for the ever-growing stream of new converts which came over to it.

C. Some have said that the Resurrection was a legend that just gradually grew up.

1. The testimony of the resurrection goes back to the very decade in which it took place.

2. Therefore, there was no possible time for legend to develop.

D. The Vision theory.

1. This speculates that the appearances of the resurrected Christ were simply vision or hallucinations brought about by the great expectations these people had that Jesus would rise from the dead.

2. If that were the case, how do we account for the fact that the women came to the tomb bearing spices.

3. Mary sat outside the tomb weeping because her Lord was dead, and the corpse had been stolen?

4. Two on the road to Emmaus were totally disconsolate and dejected because they had thought the crucified Christ was the Messiah who should have delivered Israel, but now were convinced everything was lost?

From Dr. Kennedy, “In the history of hallucinations there is no incident in which five hundred people from different backgrounds, of different temperaments, ever saw the same vision at the same time! Furthermore, there are innumerable other reefs upon which that ship will go aground. If these were simply hallucinations that they were seeing, did none of the disciples think about going to the tomb to see if the body was still there? When they proclaimed their ‘hallucinations,’ did none of their enemies ever consider taking a few steps over to examine the tomb? When Peter preached at Pentecost about his ‘great hallucination,’ he was only ten minutes away from the tomb. Thousands of people believed; other thousands heard and did not believe. Did no one think of walking down the street to check it out? Hardly! Certainly those sophisticated, conspiring Sadducees would have taken every opportunity to show that this was simply a hallucination.

E. The “Swoon” theory.

1. This has been set forth by Venturini (Karl Venturini, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, suggested the “swoon theory.” The swoon theory says that Jesus swooned, or fainted, on the cross, but did not die. He revived in the cool air of the tomb, escaped from it, and appeared “alive” to people, even though He had actually never died).

2. It is found in the writings of Mary Baker Eddy (founder of the religious denomination known as Christian Science).

3. It is found in the writings of Hugh Schonfield in *The Passover Plot*.

It is interesting, however, that for more than eighteen hundred years there was never a whisper from the friends or the most implacable enemies of Christianity that Jesus Christ had not died. Some of these recent writers have now conceived the idea that Jesus had simply swooned, was taken down from the cross and thought to be dead; then, in the coolness of the tomb, He revived and came out and convinced His disciples that He had risen from the dead.

#### IV. Facts.

A. The wound from the centurion—delivered into the side with a Roman spear, producing both blood and water—empirical evidence that life had ceased, because the blood and separated into its constituent elements.

B. The testimony of the centurion who was sent by Pilate, a man who dealt and trafficked in death, whose business it was as an executioner to know that Jesus was dead.

Suppose He did free Himself from those grave clothes, without in any way disturbing them, and then go to the huge stone that sealed the tomb. He would have had to move it with hands that had been pierced with the large Roman spikes used for crucifixions. He would have had to place them on the flat inside of the enormous stone and simply roll it away. Greek terms in the Gospels indicated that it was rolled uphill. Indeed, that is a miraculous feat in itself! He then would have had to overcome a Roman armed guard and walk fourteen miles that afternoon to Emmaus and back. That was to loosen up His feet after the spikes had pierced them, to get in shape for His walk all the way to the north of Palestine to Galilee where He climbed a mountain.

C. The Ascension of Jesus Christ.

**All the theories that have been propounded fall into the dust as we examine facts so evident that no one has ever been able to refute them.**

D. The Roman guard admitted it; the Sanhedrin admitted it by telling the soldiers to say that His disciples had stolen Him.

#### Conclusion from Dr. Kennedy

There is the final fact of Christian experience: that this risen Jesus Christ has gone throughout all the world and that He has reached down and transformed human beings in every nation, tongue, and tribe of this earth; that countless millions of people have come to know that He is alive from the dead and has come to enter their lives and transform them. He is the One who says: “I am he that lives and

who was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore...Whosoever lives and believeth in me shall never die" (Revelation 1:18; John 11:26).

Even now Christ stands knocking at the door of our hearts and He says, "If any man hears my voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Unless we have come to know Him experientially in the laboratory of our own soul, we are without hope in this world and world to come. For Jesus and His resurrection are the only hope of mankind. Without that, we have nothing to look forward to but a black hole in the ground.

Christ is risen, indeed! He is alive, as He said, and He is willing to come and live in our hearts if we are willing to repent of our sins and place our trust in Him who died for us and rose again.

## Lesson 10

## “Why I Believe in Christianity”

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Introduction from Dr. Kennedy: “It is necessary that we believe that Christianity has been a boon to mankind, that it has had a beneficent effect upon the human race. That opinion is not held by everyone. The redoubtable Madalyn Murray O’Hair, for example, has said that nothing good has ever come from Christianity. If Christianity has not done good and produced good, then we must reject it regardless of anything else. Even Christ taught: ‘you will know them by their fruits’ (Matthew 7:16).

What are the facts and the fruits of the Christian faith? Christianity teaches that the human race is depraved, fallen and sinful. First of all, then, we should keep in mind that we have this treasure in earthen vessels, and there has never been a perfect reflection of Jesus Christ in the life of any of His followers.

Second, we must remember that Christianity has often been blamed for things that true Christians did not do, and that those who profess do not necessarily possess what they profess. For example, perhaps the darkest blotch and accusation that could be brought against Christianity would be the Spanish Inquisition. I would not endeavor to defend it. It was deplorable in the highest degree, a monstrous epic of brutality and barbarity. It was diabolical in its nature.”

The “Crusades” is another dark hour in the name of Christianity. There were at least four major “crusades”, but we will only look at the first. Most historians consider the sermon preached by Pope Urban II at Clermont-Ferrand in November 1095 to have been the spark that fueled a wave of military campaigns to wrest the Holy Land from Muslim control. Considered at the time to be divinely sanctioned, these campaigns, involving often ruthless battles, are known as the Crusades. At their core was a desire for access to shrines associated with the life and ministry of Jesus, above all the Holy Sepulcher, the church in Jerusalem said to contain the tomb of Christ. Absolution from sin and eternal glory were promised to the Crusaders, who also hoped to gain land and wealth in the East. Nobles and peasants responded in great number to the call and marched across Europe to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine empire. With the support of the Byzantine emperor, the knights, guided by Armenian Christians), tenuously marched to Jerusalem through Seljuq-controlled territories in modern Turkey and Syria. In June 1099, the Crusaders began a five-week siege of Jerusalem, which fell on July 15, 1099). Eyewitness accounts attest to the terror of battle. Ralph of Caen, watching the city from the Mount of Olives, saw “the scurrying people, the fortified towers, the roused garrison, the men rushing to arms, the women in tears, the priests turned to their prayers, the streets ringing with cries, crashing, clanging and neighing.” Jesus said, “Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight...” (John 18:36).

- I. What has Christianity accomplished?
  - A. Since Christianity came into the world, it has become a world force.
    1. In 1980 it numbered almost three times the size of its nearest rival.

This came about against the most staggering odds when one considers that Christianity is the proclamation of the death of a carpenter of Nazareth, who is claimed to be the Divine Creator of the world. Suppose that today in the cities of Europe or America missionaries were to appear telling us that just recently some obscure peasant had been put to death in Persia and was reputed to have risen from the dead and declared to be the eternal Creator of the cosmos. What chance do you think such missionaries would have in propagating such a religion? Can you not see that the probabilities against such a faith ever taking hold would be staggering? But this is precisely what the apostles did in the Roman Empire, and amazing as it is, they succeeded in overthrowing that pagan empire. This feat simply demonstrates that in this absurd and incredible declaration **there must have been inherent some supernatural power. It was indeed the very power of the Spirit of God**, who reached down and drew unto Himself those whom He would by irresistible power.

2. Waves of torture swept the Roman Empire.

a. Yet, **the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.**

b. Soon a Christian was placed on the throne of Rome, and the mightiest empire the world had ever seen collapsed before the gospel of the Galilean carpenter.

B. Many people today who live in a Christian environment with Christian ethics do not realize how much we owe Jesus of Nazareth.

1. The world into which He was born was an altogether different world from ours, and, without His coming, the world would be an altogether different place from the one we know today.

2. What goodness and mercy there is in this world have come in large measure from Him.

Consider the gladiatorial fights. Hundreds of thousands of slaves shed their blood in the arena in Rome year after year to satisfy the perverted lusts of the Roman mob. One day a Christian by the name of Telemachus leaped into the arena between two armed gladiators and held them apart. At a sign from the emperor, he was pierced with their swords and fell to the ground. But by sacrificing his life he spared the lives of hundreds of thousands of others. There was no cry of glee from the crowd. They looked at this saintly man lying dead in his blood, and a silence came over that vast arena. They went out shamefacedly, and that was the end of the gladiatorial shows in Rome. Jesus Christ had given worth and significance to every life: "Are you not worth much more than these?"

C. The child of today is loved and adored.

1. It was not so in pre-Christian times.

2. The Roman father's power over his child was absolute.

3. He could expose it to death; he could scourge it, mutilate it, marry it, divorce it, sell it as a slave, or kill it to satisfy his own blood lust.

Quintilian, a Roman writer, said that to kill a man was often held to be a crime, but to kill one's own children was sometimes considered a beautiful action among the Romans. Tacitus, the great Roman writer, tells us of newborn children who were taken on the first day of their lives and left on the mountainside, exposed to wild beasts, or to those strange people who flitted around in the dark to seize

these children for even more perverse and horrible destinies and dents. Jesus Christ took a little child in His arms and blessed it, and infanticide began to melt away from the world.

D. The state of women in that day.

1. In the heathen world the condition of women was no less dismal than that of children.
2. Women were of very little esteem until Jesus came.

The writings of the Hindus, the Brahminical writings, state that a woman is never fit for independence; women have no business with the scriptures of Hindus; and sinful women must be as foul as falsehood itself.

Robert Ingersoll, a great skeptic who lectured against the Bible, had the audacity at one time to make a statement that women were better off in heathen lands than they were in Christian lands. Consider the state of women in heathen lands. The traveler Commander Cameron witnessed in the center of Africa the death of a chieftain and the usual practice that ensued. First the tribal members diverted the course of a river and in its bed dug an enormous pit, the bottom of which was then covered with living women. At one end a woman was placed on her hands and knees and upon her back was seated the dead chief, covered with beads and other treasures, being supported by one of his wives, while the second wife sat at his feet. The earth was then shoveled in upon them and all the women were buried alive with the exception of the second wife. For her, the custom was merciful for she had the privilege of being killed before being buried. Or consider the grotesque Indian custom of Suttee: Whenever a husband died the woman was burned alive with the body of her husband.

E. The slave in the ancient world.

1. Half of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves.
2. The city of Athens had four hundred thousand inhabitants; one hundred thousand of those were free and three hundred thousand were slaves.

Slavery in the ancient world was far more brutal than anything modern slavery has demonstrated. One Roman had six hundred slaves put to death for the killing of a man. Another Roman master put a slave to death simply for the pleasure of a guest who had never seen anyone die.

What brought an end to ancient slavery? It was the gospel of Jesus Christ! It was a small letter Paul, the apostle, wrote to Philemon. A runaway slave had been thrown into a Roman prison with Paul, and Paul had led him to Christ. When released, Paul sent him back to Philemon. The custom at that time was to kill an escaped slave after he had been recaptured. Philemon had also become a Christian—another convert of Paul said to Philemon: “Receive him...not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother” (Philemon 15&16). In that new brotherhood in Jesus Christ that was being produced throughout the Roman world slavery found its death knell.

F. Christian missions.

1. The Papuans, one of the aboriginal tribes of Australia, were considered by some evolutionists to be so primitive that they had less mind than a crow. Yet missionaries from Holland began to work with them. For many years they met defeat and discouragement, as not one single Papuan



accepted Christ. Finally in 1860 the firstfruits of the New Holland Mission were seen when a man named Nathaniel Pepper, one of the Papuan aborigines, accepted Jesus Christ. Some years later, when thousands had been converted, the Papuan school won first prize in academic competitions among the twelve hundred colonial schools in New Holland. Quite a feat for those with the brains of a crow!

2. Skeptics have done little for the savage. They have built few leprosaria, few hospitals, few orphanages. **It has remained for the followers of Jesus Christ to care for the offscouring of mankind.**

II. Christianity has brought to the world liberty and freedom.

A. In every ancient state, the state was supreme and the individual was nothing; the individual's only significance was to the state.

B. In modern times where the gospel of Christ has been banished and atheism is again ruling (as in communist lands), the same ancient pagan doctrine is back in force.

C. **But where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty, and Jesus is the One who gave individuals their worth.**

D. The Son of God came from heaven and gave His life for me and for you and for all others.

1. The Mayflower Compact, that first document of the New World, begins in this way: "Having undertaken for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith..."

2. Rhode Island, 1638: "We, whose names are underwritten do here solemnly in the presence of Jehovah, incorporate ourselves into a body politic and as He shall help, will submit our persons, our lives, and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of Lords."

**Those who wish to separate the Bible from the state will have to take it out of the charter of many of our early states. Freedom is one of the gifts of Christianity.**

The Christian faith is the only force impeding and preventing the total disappearance of freedom in the world today. Communism recognized that the church of Christ was its most implacable foe. That is why the first of the ten commandments of the Komsomol (the world youth communist movement) stated that the number one enemy of communism was the Christian clergymen.

E. The head of the armed forces of South Korea realized that the North Koreans showed an incredible fear of a little black book called the New Testament. Therefore, he himself, though a Buddhist, ordered that every man in the armed forces of South Korea should be given a New Testament. The result was an enormous awakening in which several hundreds of thousands of soldiers were converted to Jesus Christ.

1. The gospel of Christ is the salt of the earth that prevents utter corruption.

2. That gospel is enshrined in the hearts of those who are believers.

From Dr. Kennedy: "What would it mean if every person in the United States were converted to Jesus Christ in reality? I do not mean the church member; I mean a twice-born child of God. 'If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, new things have come' (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17 NASB). It should mean that the jails would become empty; the courts would shut down;

the bars would close; the pornographic stores and theaters would be without business. There would be no need for alarm devices in homes, or even locks on doors, because genuine Christians, born-again men and women do not steal, kill, rape, or do any of the thousands of other things that make life so unpleasant in America today.

III. Progress has been the result of Christianity.

A. Science, as one scientist said, could never have originated in any other culture.

B. It could not have originated among the Buddhists or the Hindus of Asia because of their belief that the physical world is not real, that nothing exists but God, and that all this is merely imagination. Only in Christianity could science have come to be!

IV. Only in Christianity did education come to the world.

From Dr. Kennedy: "I recall reading a list of the literacy rates of the nations around 1900. At that time the Western civilization of America and Europe had not been smeared all over the world as it is today, so that Tokyo looks little different from New York. Rather, each civilization reflected its own indigenous culture. What are the results? All of the nations that would be called 'Pagan' had literacy rates from 0 to 20 percent. Those nations that could be classified as Roman Catholic—such as Spain, Italy, Mexico, and so on—had literacy rates between 40 and 60 percent. All of the nations that could be categorized as Protestant had literacy rates of between 90 and almost 100 percent. Why? Because of their belief in the Word of God and necessity for children to learn to read so they could read the Word of God."

Conclusion from Dr. Kennedy:

"Who has gone down into the slums to rescue the derelict? It is the city mission, the YMCA, the settlement mission. Only Christians have given themselves for such people as these. Today with the advancing of the barbarians again and the removal of the Scriptures from much of this land and much of the world, we again see decay and corruption setting in.

You and I are the salt of the earth. We need to get the salt out of the shaker and be that which preserves the life and health and morality of society. In these critical days, I am very glad to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ and of that kingdom that shall never end. He came and He died and promised that those who would trust in Him, who would simply trust in His death for their salvation, will themselves be transformed and renewed and made into the preservative of society and the only hope of the future of mankind."

## Lesson 11

## “Why I Believe in the Second Birth”

John 3:6&7, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

Introduction from Dr. Kennedy:

“Along with John and Charles Wesley, the famous Anglican clergyman George Whitefield was much responsible for the transformation of England and The Great Awakening in America. In a letter to Benjamin Franklin, who used to delight to come and hear Whitefield speak, he said: ‘As I find you growing more and more famous in the learned world, I would recommend to your diligent and unprejudiced study the mystery of the new birth. It is a most important study, and, when mastered, will richly answer all your pains. I bid you, my friend, remember that One at whose bar we shall both presently appear hath solemnly declared that without it we shall in no wise see His kingdom.’ A very wise recommendation to a man who is noted in the history of the world as being a wise man. History, however, affords us no evidence that Franklin heeded those words.

Jesus Christ said, ‘Ye must be born again’ (John 3:7). That, primarily, is why I believe in the second birth: because Christ stated it. He declared it boldly, imperiously. ‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God’ (John 3:3). Therefore, I would, as solemnly and as earnestly as Whitefield did, urge upon your hearts, minds, and consciences this day the question: Have you been born again?”

I. Jesus Christ tells us that, unless we have been born again, we shall not only not enter but we will also never even see the kingdom of heaven.

A. *Must*, it is said, is the word of a king; and Christ is the King of kings and the kingdom of God. And Christ says, “You must be born again.”

B. The theological doctrine is called *regeneration*.

**The message of the entire Bible could be summed up in three words: *creation* (or *generation*), *degeneration*, and *regeneration*. This is the message of the Bible from one end to the other. God made man perfect. Man fell into sin and must be re-created into the image of God by the power of God’s Spirit working through the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

C. Not only did Christ teach it, but also everywhere throughout Scripture, it is taught; it is consistently taught as fact and a necessity.

1. It is described as a making alive. “You hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).

2. It is a passing from death unto life.

3. It is a resurrection from the dead.

4. It is a beginning again.

5. It is being born of God.

6. It is being begotten again—not of corruptible but of incorruptible seed of the Word of God (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:23).

7. It is being begotten again unto a living hope (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:3).

8. It is the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

Religiosity, piety, morality will not suffice. Unless we have hearts that have been transformed to love God in truth with all our hearts and souls, we shall not see God and we shall not live.

II. From Dr. Kennedy: “This doctrine has puzzled the hearts of billions of men. They have pondered it in the night season in their own closets. Upon their beds they have wondered, *Is it true—is it possible that I can become a new person?* The Scripture clearly affirms that not only is it possible, but it is also absolutely essential. Christ taught it, the Scripture declares it, and all the creeds of the historic church of Christ affirm it. It is taught everywhere. The Westminster Confession of Faith, containing the doctrinal statements of the whole Presbyterian world, declares the belief that **this true faith being wrought in man by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit does regenerate and make him a new man, causing him to live a new life and freeing him from the bondage of sin.** But it does not matter whether they are Presbyterian, Reformed, Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, Congregational, or Church of God Mission—all of the symbols, creeds, and formalities of the church have expressly declared the necessity that man must be born again.”

III. Hymns.

A. Christmas.

1. *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*—“To save us all from Satan's power, When we were gone astray.”

2. *Hark the Herald Angles Sing*—“Born to raise the sons of earth  
Born to give them second birth”

B. Songs we sing at Gatherings (church services).

1. *Just Over in the Glory Land*—“With the blood washed through I will shout and sing”

2. *I Love to Tell the Story*—“I love to tell the story, for some have never heard  
The message of salvation from God's own holy Word.”

Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher of a century ago, said that natural man—the unregenerate—can no more understand what the new birth is, or what spiritual things are than a horse can understand astronomy. Imagine trying to teach astronomy to a horse! We might just as well try to teach the meaning of spiritual things to someone who has not been born of God's Spirit. For the Scripture declares: “The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2:14).

IV. The second birth is taught in all of the theologies and dictionaries of historical theological works.

A. Thousands of theologians down through the centuries have taught that it is absolutely essential that man experience the fact of regeneration.

B. All around us, down through twenty centuries, innumerable millions of people from every station in life have experienced this transforming power of rebirth.

They have become new creatures in their hearts and have been transformed from the very depths of their beings. All types of people—the great and the mighty; the base and the low; the noble and the ignoble; the savage and the sophisticate—have experienced the regenerating power of God and have thenceforth enjoyed the same new life in Christ.

C. Testimonies.

1. Cyprian, a wealthy noble who lived in the third century, enjoyed galloping about Carthage in his gold and bejeweled chariot, wearing fancy clothes studded with diamonds and precious stones, living a debauched life. In a letter to one of the Christian theologians of the time, he said that he could not possibly conceive how he could change his life—the life he had lived for so long. The inveterate habits, tastes, and desires that he had developed, the sins that he clutched to his bosom, how could he ever possibly give these things up? How could he ever be like the Christians he saw? He said it seemed to him to be an utterly impossible thing; yet, in the mysterious providence of God, that which had seemed utterly impossible came to pass and Cyprian was transformed. God reached down from heaven and took out of Cyprian's breast that stony heart and placed within him a heart of flesh—a heart tuned to love his God and sing His praises. Cyprian, who became one of the great Christian leaders of the early church, said that the thing that before had seemed so utterly impossible and mysterious and difficult to understand had all become plain. All of his problems had disappeared.

2. Abraham Lincoln tells us in his letters that at Gettysburg, the day he delivered his famous address, he, too, was born again of God's Spirit.

### 3. **What is your testimony?**

From Dr. Kennedy: "I remember the preacher who came to a church and on his first Sunday preached on this text, 'Ye must be born again,' and the people listened. Some squirmed. The following Sunday the preacher preached on the same text again, and the people were puzzled. The following week, he preached on the same text again. Finally, some of the deacons said to him, 'Pastor, why is it that every Sunday you preach on the same text, 'Ye must be born again?' He replied, 'Because you must.'

My friends, this is the only thing that you must do during your stay on this planet—the only thing you must do. You don't have to even grow up. You don't have to succeed. You don't have to get married. You don't have to have children. You don't have to have a home, a car, and all of the things that people think they must have. The only thing that you must have is a rebirth because your entire future forever depends upon it. **You must be born again."**

IV. The reason for the necessity of the new birth.

A. The fact of the old death.

1. The Scripture plainly teaches that we were born dead (Romans 5:12)
2. Intellectually, emotionally, aesthetically, rationally, physically, yes we were alive; but spiritually, we were born dead.

**From Dr. Kennedy: “There is an old spiritual axiom that many of the great theologians of the past repeated to impress upon people the necessity: The Bible not only teaches that there is a second birth, but it also teaches that there is a second death in addition to the physical death that we shall all endure. Those whose names are not found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death! Condemned to everlasting torment, they will have no rest, day or night, forever. So, the axiom is very plain: **born once, die twice—born twice, die once.** Which shall it be with you? Have you been born again?”**

V. How?

A. Jesus, in the third chapter of John, describes to us the mechanism whereby a man is born again. He says in John 3:8, “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

1. The Holy Spirit is the agent of our regeneration.
2. We do not “born” ourselves.

We are begotten by God. We are created anew. We are new creatures. We are the workmanship of God. We are the objects, and God is the subject. Regeneration is something God does to us with His almighty power. The agent is the Holy Spirit, and the instrument is the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. John 1:12, “But **as many as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:”

C. Romans 5:1, “Therefore, having been **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”

D. Romans 10:9&10, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Conclusion from Dr. Kennedy:

“Have you been born again? If so, you are trusting in Jesus Christ and not in yourself. You have turned from your own righteousness. The great theologian Dr. Hoh Gerstner of Pittsburgh said that so often the only thing that stands between God and sinners is the sinners’ virtue. They have no righteousness in reality, but in them their righteousness is real, their virtues an illusion. Because they will not give up their trust in their own goodness and acknowledge their sin and trust in Christ, these form an impenetrable barrier between the sinners and the Savior. We have nothing to contribute to our salvation, my friends, except one thing: our sin. That is our total contribution. Our faith and our repentance are the work of God’s grace in our hearts. Our contribution is simply the sin for which Jesus Christ suffered and died.

Would you be born anew? There has never been a person who sought for the new birth who did not find it. Even the seeking is created by the Holy Spirit of God. Would you know that new life? Are you tired of the emptiness and purposelessness of your life? Are you tired of the filthy rags of your own righteousness? Would you trust in Someone other than yourself? Then look to the cross of Christ. Place

your trust in Him. Ask Him to come in and be born in you today. For Jesus came into the world from glory to give us second birth because we must—***we must—be born again.***

## Lesson 12

## “Why I Believe in the Holy Spirit”

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:16, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

Introduction from Dr. Kennedy:

“Of all the doctrines of the Christian faith, the one that causes the most trouble for many people seems to be that of the Holy Spirit. This is not surprising. In the introduction to this book, I said that my reason for writing it lay in the amazing number of Americans who are confused about who Jesus Christ is. I have found that even more people are confused about the fact that who He is—the carpenter of Galilee who is and was and ever shall be the eternal, omnipotent Creator and God Almighty of this universe—constitutes the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion. How natural, then, that less is understood about the Holy Spirit.

Presenting the biblical evidence for what I believe about the Holy Spirit is the most effective way I can think of for stating why I believe in the Holy Spirit. At the same time, finding out who the Bible says the Holy Spirit is, what He does, and how we may receive His blessing should clear away the confusion about Him.”

Introduction 2—This is not an exhaustive study of the Holy Spirit. We will not take the time to discuss the “fruit of the Spirit” or the “gifts of the Spirit.” Perhaps we will study these at a later date.

I. Who is the Holy Spirit?

A. An “It” or “He?”

1. Many people refer to the Holy Spirit as “it.”
2. A force, a thing, a power, an influence.

B. **The Holy Spirit is a person.**

1. The Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is a person.
2. However, the use of the word *person* is not intended to conjure up an image of a stick figure with arms, legs, fingers, and toes.

**Rather, let us use the true sense of the word, in which *person* means “that which has personality, that is, will, intellect, emotion, ability to communicate,” and so on.**

C. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is not clearly revealed, and the Jews very easily and understandably mistook the Spirit for being simply a power, and influence of God.

1. The distinctions in the triune Godhead—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—though present, were also not clearly revealed to them.
2. The Old Testament is like a richly furnished but dimly lit room; in the New Testament nothing is as added except light.



Of course, there are today those who deny the personality of the Holy Spirit on the basis that the Bible doesn't say in so many words that the Holy Spirit is a person. But neither does the Bible set forth arguments to prove that God exists; this is something that is plainly revealed and understood. And so it is with the Holy Spirit.

D. What is a person?

1. What is the difference between a force and a person?
  - a. Does electricity have a mind?
  - b. Does the wind have a mind?
  - c. Does gravity have intellect?
2. Emotion.
  - a. Does electricity laugh?
  - b. Does gravity cry?
  - c. Does a force love?
  - d. Can a force express its thoughts.
  - e. Does a force have a will to decide that it will do something?
  - f. Is it self-motivated, or is it governed merely by external laws or by persons who direct it.

**A force has no will of its own. A person does.**

E. The Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

1. The Bible refers to the mind of the Spirit: Romans 8:27, "Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*"
2. The Holy Spirit has a mind.
3. He makes intercession.
4. The Scriptures speak of the infinite comprehension of the Spirit: 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:11, "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."
5. The Holy Spirit has a will: 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:11, "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."

F. Characteristics of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit not only knows but even foreknows: John 16:13, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and **He will tell you things to come.**”

2. Love of the Spirit: Romans 15:30, “Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through **the love of the Spirit**, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,”

3. He grieves: Ephesians 4:30, “And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit** of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

4. He “calls”: Acts 13:2, “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the **Holy Spirit said**, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to **which I have called them.**”

5. He appoints leaders in the church: Acts 20:28, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

6. He hears: John 16:13, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but **whatever He hears** He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

7. The Holy Spirit speaks: Acts 8:29, “Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”

## **We see that all the attributes of personality are given to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person.**

G. The Holy Spirit is Divine.

1. In the Book of Acts we read that Peter said to Ananias, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? (5:3). When shortly thereafter Peter says to Ananias, “You have not lied to men but to God” (5:4).

2. He is infinite, omnipresent: He knows all things; He knows the future; He is all-powerful.

From Dr. Kennedy:

“I believe, however, that we must understand that the Holy Spirit is not merely another name for God the Father, but that there is a distinction of the personalities of the Godhead. This is clearly seen in a number of places. The baptismal formula requires us to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—one name, three persons. IN the baptism of Jesus, we see the Holy Spirit descend as a dove and the Father speak from above the clouds: ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’ (Matthew 3:17). The three personalities are thus clearly revealed. The same truth is affirmed again in the Bible in many places, including Christ’s penetrating words in what we call the Great Commission: “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” (Matthew 28:19).

In spite of all the clear teachings of Scripture, however, one ancient heresy persists in some places even today. ‘Modalism,’ from the word *mode*, teaches that the Holy Spirit is a divine person but that He is simply the Father or the Son. This is like saying, in effect, that the Father first came out on stage as an actor with a long beard; then He went backstage, changed His costume, and returned to the stage as a young man, the Son; going backstage again, He then returned in yet another costume as the Spirit—just one person, in three disguises. But the Bible teaches that the Godhead is a triune Godhead of three personalities within the one substance of God, coeternal, existing side by side forever: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.’ (John 1:1).

II. What the Bible says the Holy Spirit does.

A. Among His works are such as these.

1. He created the world.
2. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Scriptures so that the Bible is not like any other book.
3. The Holy Spirit caused Christ to be conceived in the womb of Mary.
4. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness.
5. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead: Romans 8:11, “But if **the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead** dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

B. The Holy Spirit regenerates men and quickens (makes alive) them from their deadness in sin.

1. Jesus said that we must be born again of the Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian.
3. The Holy Spirit sanctifies, cleanses, makes pure and holy.
4. The Holy Spirit does not come to glorify Himself or magnify Himself; you notice that He does not even have a distinctive name. Jesus said, “When the comforter is come...he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

C. The Holy Spirit is the One who brings grace and enables the Christian to live the Christian life. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.”

III. The experience of His indwelling.

A. Believers have received the “earnest” of their inheritance, for the Holy Spirit also gives us the assurance that we have eternal life.

B. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

It is the Holy Spirit who can enable us as Christians to say, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine; O what a foretaste of glory divine.” If we have that assurance and that certainty in our hearts, then we know that we have the Holy Spirit within us.

Conclusion from Dr. Kennedy:

**“The Bible says that every believer receives the Holy Spirit when he or she becomes a Christian. But then we are to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, for we are leaky vessels. We need to have the fullness of His presence.** I believe the reason there are so many defeated and downcast Christians is that they are not filled with the Holy Spirit. In our homes, is there love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness? Or is there strife, discouragement, bickering, worry, anxiety, sadness? All these are evidences that the spirit of God is not there, for He is the Spirit of joy and peace and love. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

If the fullness of the Spirit of God is missing in our life and you would like to know it, if you want to live and serve God as He would have you do, I have a suggestion for you to try. Dr. Bill Bright asked this of the people of our church at a service many years ago and it had a profound effect at that time. He recommended to all those who wanted to be not merely hearers of the Word but doers also, that they go home, find a good-sized piece of paper, and on it write down all the specific sins present in their lives. List the sins of disposition, he said: impatience, bitterness, jealousy, envy, grudges held, slights unforgiven, animosity, anger, lust, lasciviousness, unclean thoughts, greed, covetousness, avarice (an extremely strong wish to get or keep money or possessions), and so on. Be specific; name names, was the instruction. Don’t forget the sin of omission: prayerlessness, cold-heartedness to God, faithlessness to His Word, service unrendered, witness not given, and other such sins—not hiding them in our hearts and failing to meditate on them.

Dr. Bright then instructed us to pray that the Holy Spirit would search and try us to see if there was still anything wicked in us that we had not confessed and forsaken. When the Holy Spirit brought something else to mind as we waited before Him, we wrote it down. We waited and asked again, ‘Holy Spirit of God, search me and try my heart, and see if there is still anything wicked in me.’ We continued to ask and wait, until we could genuinely come before God with a conscience free of offense toward Him and our fellow human beings. I can think of no greater blessing. Even this doesn’t mean we are perfect, of course, but means there is nothing that will come to mind that we will not confess, repent of and forsake.

**Now, write in large letters across the page (or pages): ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanse us from all sin.’** Claim that promise by faith. Believe it. At this point, for the first time, perhaps, you will be ready to say what Jesus said—to ask the Father to fill you with the Holy Spirit. ‘If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?’ (Luke 11:13). Ask the Father for the Holy Spirit. He cannot come when we are filled with self and with sin, with self-righteousness and pride and a pharisaical spirit. If we humble ourselves before God and confess our sins and our stiff-necked attitude, then God will come and fulfill His promise and fill us with His Spirit—the Spirit of love and the Spirit of joy. He will give us a new heart—a soft heart.

**Now take the paper and burn it. Tear it up! Throw it away!** But claim the promise and believe God and go forth to live and walk in the Spirit and serve Him by the power of His Spirit. 'Be filled with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 9:17).

**Here is our challenge. James says, let's not be like those who hear the Word and go away and do nothing about it; or like those who behold their faces in a mirror and go away and forget how they look. I believe that it is only as we ask for this cleansing and fullness of the Holy Spirit that we will enter into an experience of blessedness, a closeness, and a realization of the presence of God in our lives that we have never known before."**