

The Doctrines Of The Church Christ Built

*An examination of the major doctrines of the Church
Jesus Christ built in the Four Gospels*

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Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philipians 2:5-11

Preface

I have written this book in response to the satanic attack against Christ and the Four Gospels today. Christ's earthly ministry as recorded in the Four Gospels is maligned, misunderstood, perverted and criticized from all quarters, religious and political.

The communists and socialists would have us to believe that Jesus Christ was a political revolutionary who came to over throw the government and to redistribute the wealth and set up a socialist welfare state of his own. To them he was another Marx, Castro, Mao, or Lenin and the Four Gospels a political manifesto like Carl Marx's Communist Manifesto.

The religious liberals and modernists would have us to believe that Jesus was a great man, teacher and philosopher but was not God. Most deny his deity and his miracles and question the authenticity of the Four Gospels. They place Jesus on the same level with other religious leaders like Mohammad, Gandhi, the Pope and Mother Teresa. To them the Four Gospels are no different than other so called "great books" written by men.

All of the cults attack and condemn Jesus Christ. They say he was not God but a created being or "mystic". Most have their own christs and books they exalt above the Bible.

The politicians of our day would have us to believe Jesus was a Democrat or a Republican to get you to vote for them. Here in the South both parties would have us to believe that a vote for them is a vote for Jesus. To them the Four Gospels is a political handbook to reform society.

But the people who disturb me the most are those who call themselves dispensationalists many of which are in reality hyper dispensationalists. Many of them have shoved the Four Gospels aside and put up a no trespassing sign on them and have led people to believe that doctrine for the church is not found in the Four Gospels. They even go as far as to say they do not know or follow Christ in what they call his

“earthly ministry”. This book is directed at them and my prayer is to change people’s minds about the Four Gospels and to convince them that Christ has a lot to say to the church today, for after all it was in the Four Gospels he announced he would build his church.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:13-18

Introduction

Today there are two extremes when it comes to the Four Gospels. There are those who spend most of their time in the Four Gospels and very little time in the epistles of the Apostles. On the other side there are many who spend the majority of their time in the epistles of the Apostles, especially Paul’s, and very little time in the Four Gospels.

Those who spend most of their time in the Four Gospels are generally ignorant of what Paul and the other Apostles wrote in their epistles and those who spend most of their time in the epistles of Paul know little of what Christ said in the Four Gospels.

Those who spend most of their time in the Four Gospels assume they are superior to the epistles of the Apostles. Once I quoted what Paul said about a certain issue to a lady who spends most of her time in the Four Gospels and she said to me that if Jesus didn’t say it then it could not be true. But, I hear and see the same attitude in those who spend most of their time in Paul’s Epistles. They say, if Paul doesn’t say it, then it’s not for us today. I have heard this comment countless times in my life.

This attitude is promoted by dispensationalists like C.I. Scofield. One of the worst notes in the Scofield Bible is at the bottom of Ephesians 3. It says: **That in Paul’s writings alone is found the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the church.** Scofield did not say in Paul’s writings is found the doctrine, position, and destiny of the Church. He said in Paul’s writings ALONE. That note has been a major stumbling block to many Christians for years who call themselves dispensationalists. Many others believe and teach this theory and it has led many Christians to exalt Paul above Jesus and Paul’s epistles above the Four Gospels.

In some dispensational circles there is almost a hostile arrogant, attitude toward the Four Gospels. A few years ago a preacher I know personally was called to be the pastor of a church that agrees with Scofield’s note, but was asked to leave a short time later.

Was it because of sin in his life? Was it because he stole money from the church? Was it because he ran off with the piano player? No. His great “sin” was preaching doctrine from the Four Gospels! If he began a message from a text in the Four Gospels the people would refuse to open their Bibles. They sat with their Bibles closed simply because his text was taken from the Four Gospels. Their brand of dispensationalism taught them there was nothing in the Four Gospels for them and as far as they were concerned they were no different than the Old Testament.

I heard a preacher recently say that you cannot walk worthy of the Lord by following the Four Gospels. He even went as far to say that if you follow what Christ said in the Four Gospels you are “walking in ignorance”!

A man recently challenged me to show him salvation from what Christ preached in the Four Gospels. He sarcastically referred to them as the “red letter words” as if there is something evil about them. This man has only been saved about 9 months, has never read the Bible through once in his life, and yet someone has led him to believe you cannot even get saved by the doctrine Christ preached in the Four Gospels! A few years ago I heard a preacher spend an hour in a Bible conference trying to convince the audience they could not get saved by John 3:16! He said the gospel cannot be found in John 3:16. He totally ignored John 3:14.

At another Bible conference in Indiana a preacher asked me if I preached the New Birth. I said yes, don’t you? He said no. I asked why? He said because it’s found in the Four Gospels. This man is widely known in dispensational circles, but has such a disdain for the Four Gospels that he refuses to preach the New Birth. His brand of dispensationalism does not allow him to preach doctrine from the Four Gospels. People like him will accuse you of “wrongly dividing” the word of truth if you preach doctrine out of the Four Gospels today.

A lady who sat under the teaching of preachers like these told me recently that she was led to believe there was nothing in the Four Gospels for her and she never read them and almost developed a negative attitude toward them. She was told that all that God wanted her to know is found in the Pauline Epistles.

When approaching the Four Gospels or any portion of the scriptures the best method of Bible study and interpretation is the one Paul used: It’s very simple. When Paul was confronted with a doctrinal issue he said: **What saith the scriptures?** This is what really matters. What you or I believe does not amount to a hill of beans. The theories of dispensationalism are just that, theories. What matters is what saith the scriptures? What do the Four Gospels actually say? What did Christ really preach in the Four Gospels? What does the Bible say about this issue? You will see in this book that he preached many of the same doctrines that Paul preached. Many extreme dispensationalists deny this, but the scriptures prove them wrong over and over again.

You will also see what a wonderful, gracious Savior we really have. You cannot know the Lord in all of his grace, compassion and fullness if you ignore what he preached in

the Four Gospels. Christians have told me they did not really know the Lord in all his fullness and glory until they began to read the Four Gospels with an open mind. For years their minds were closed by the notes of the Scofield Bible and by teachers like Scofield who believe doctrine for the Church is found only in Paul's Epistles. Many Christians who were once entrenched in the false theories of hyper dispensationalism become amazed when they realize Christ preached many of the same doctrines that we hold dear today. They came to see, like many others, that when Paul said he followed Christ he did indeed follow what he preached in his earthly ministry.

In this book you will see what Christ preached formed the foundation upon which the church is built. This only stands to reason for it was in the Four Gospels he made the announcement he would build his church. In the Four Gospels Christ laid the foundation for his Church that you and I build on today.

The Doctrines of the Church Christ Built In The Four Gospels

Christ Preached Grace to Undeserving Sinners

John 1:17 says: ***For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*** The grace that came by Jesus Christ is in contrast with the Law that came by Moses. Christ lived under the Law of Moses, but some of the first glimpses of grace were seen in his earthly ministry. He said and did many things that were never ***said, seen or done under the Law.*** And the grace Christ preached in his earthly ministry is the same grace we preach today. It is the favor and blessing of God bestowed upon sinners who do not deserve nor merit it.

In John 8 is found an example of the unearned and undeserved favor of God bestowed upon sinners. It says: ***And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?*** (John 8:3-5)

What the scribes and Pharisees said was true. In Leviticus 20:10 the Law said this adulteress should have been put to death. But what did Christ do to her? It says in verses 10-11: ***When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?***

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

The Law condemned her, but Christ forgave her. Therefore, he did what the Law did not and could not do. The Law that came by Moses condemned adulteresses like this woman, but the grace that came by Jesus Christ forgave her. Under Moses Law this woman would have died without mercy. By the grace Christ preached she was forgiven. Christ dealt with this woman according to grace, not the Law of Moses.

(See also Luke 7:36-50 where Christ forgave a prostitute by grace.)

The grace by which he forgave these two women is the same grace we preach today. The grace we preach today forgives sinners like these women who could not be

forgiven by the Law of Moses. In Acts 13:38-39 Paul said: ***Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.***

The grace Paul preached forgave sins the Law could not forgive and pardoned sinners who could not be pardoned by the Law. In John 8 and Luke 7 Jesus pardoned two women who could not be pardoned by the Law and forgave them of sins the Law could not forgive. These are just two examples of many in the Four Gospels where Christ forgave sinners by grace who did not deserve nor earn it.

Christ Preached Justification by Faith Without Works

In Luke 18:9-14 we read a story about a sinner who was justified by grace through faith without works.

It says: ***And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.***

When Christ preached he used many parables to illustrate what he was saying. In this parable we see a man who is justified by faith who did not deserve nor earn it. In this parable God justified the publican who was the worst of the two men. The publican was an extortioner, unjust, an adulterer and did not keep the law nor fast or tithe. In works he was the opposite of the Pharisee. He clearly deserved the wrath of God and he knew it, but he asked God for mercy and received it.

This man is a perfect example of sinners God justifies today. He got what he did not deserve nor earn. All he did was simply ask God to have mercy on him and nothing else. He was not baptized, he did not keep the law, he did nothing in the way of good works, but he went down to his house justified rather than the other. If you are justified today you were justified like the publican in Luke 18. Therefore Jesus Christ preached justification by faith alone without works to undeserving sinners.

Christ Preached Life And Forgiveness Through His Death And Shed Blood

In 1 Timothy 1:15 Paul wrote concerning Christ: ***This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.***

Christ came into the world in the Four Gospels. The Four Gospels describe Christ's entrance into the world. This verse tells us why he came into the world. Some folks say Jesus came into the world to build a kingdom. Some say he came to give us an example to live by, or to fulfill prophecy, or give us a set of rules to live by. But what

saith the scriptures? It says he came into the world to save sinners. How did Paul know this? Because Christ said it over and over again in the Four Gospels.

In Luke 19:10 he said; ***For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.***

In Luke 5:32 he said; ***I came not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance.***
In John 3:17 its says; ***For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.***

Paul was aware of what Christ said and that is why he said he came into the world to save sinners. Jesus not only said he came into the world to save sinners, but he told us how he would save them in the Four Gospels.

In Matthew 20:28 Jesus said: ***Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.***

Paul quotes this verse almost verbatim in 1 Timothy 2:5 which says: ***Christ gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.***

The word ransom literally means a price paid for the redemption of captives. In war, when prisoners are taken captive by the enemy the money demanded for their release is called a ransom. It's the price paid to set them free. Anything that releases anyone from a state of punishment, suffering or sin is called a ransom.

We all need a ransom because we are all by nature captives to sin. We are sold under sin, under the condemnation of sin, and under the curse of sin. And unless we find a ransom to deliver us we will perish in hell. But, we have found a ransom. And where do we find this ransom? In the Four Gospels. Matthew declares that Christ gave himself a ransom for all men. That is, he died in the place of sinners and God was willing to accept the pains of his death on the cross in the place of the everlasting suffering that all sinners deserve in hell. The one and only ransom for sinners is found in Matthew 20:28.

John 3:14-15 says: ***And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.***

Compare this with John 12:32-33 which says: ***And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.***

As Moses lifted up a serpent on a pole in the Old Testament, Jesus Christ was lifted up on a cross in the New Testament. The serpent was lifted up to save the people from death. Christ was lifted up on the cross to save us from death, the second death which is the lake of fire. Where to we learn this? In the Four Gospels. In the Four Gospels we find Christ being lifted up on the cross to die for our sins to save us from death and hell. That's the gospel of John 3:16.

In John 6:49-51 Jesus said: ***I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.***

As God gave the Israelites manna from heaven to live, Christ gave his flesh and life on the cross that we might live forever. It cost him his body and flesh to give us life, eternal life. Where do we learn this? Again, in the Four Gospels.

In John 10 Jesus said:

Verses 10-11 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

Verse 15 *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

Verses 17-18 *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

For the sheep to have life and have it more abundantly the shepherd laid down his life for the sheep. His death was not by accident, but by design. No man took it from him. He planned to lay it down to save the sheep from sin and hell. He loved the sheep so much that he was willing to take upon himself their sins and suffer the wrath they deserve. This was planned before the foundation of the world according to 1 Peter 1:18-19.

In Matthew 26:26-29 Jesus said: ***And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***

The New Covenant has many promises. It took Paul 13 chapters in Hebrews to describe them all. The greatest promise of the New Covenant was a new and better sacrifice that would be offered once and take away sins forever and we learn of that promise in the Four Gospels. Jesus Christ is the one all sufficient sacrifice of the New Covenant. His blood is the blood of the New Testament.

In the Four Gospels we can clearly see Christ dying for sinners. We see him shedding his blood for the remission of sin. We see him laying down his life for the sheep. We see him giving up his flesh and body on the cross that we might have life, eternal life. We see him lifted up on the cross to save us from the curse of sin. We see Christ the sacrifice preaching about his own death and shed blood for our sins in the Four Gospels.

Over and over again the Four Gospels tell us Christ came into the world to die for the sins of the whole world, that the world might be saved, that the world could have everlasting life. His main mission in the world was to offer himself as the one all sufficient sacrifice for sinners just like Paul said he did in 1 Timothy 1:15.

Christ Preached Salvation And Eternal Life By Faith Alone Without Works

In Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Romans 4:5 Paul defines salvation by grace. In these verses he says salvation is the free unearned, undeserved, gift of God and not of works. The only requirement to be saved in these verses is faith in Christ. Faith alone in Christ and in his death on the cross is the very heart of salvation by grace. In the gospel of grace, God took the works out of salvation and made faith the only requirement to be saved. With this definition in mind read the following words Christ preached in his earthly ministry about faith and the requirements to be saved.

John 3:14-18

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 5:24

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

According to these verses:

- A.** Not one work is mentioned to be saved or to receive eternal life.
- B.** The only requirement mentioned for salvation and eternal life is faith in Christ.
- C.** Salvation and eternal life was received upon believing.
- D.** The person who believed was saved by Christ being lifted up on the cross and dying for his sins which is the gospel of 1 Cor.15:3-4.
- E.** Once a person believed on him, he could not come into condemnation.
- F.** When he believed, he passed from death to life.
- G.** Those who were condemned were condemned because they did not believe.

This is what Christ preached in his earthly ministry concerning salvation and eternal life. This is exactly what Paul and we preach when we preach the gospel of the grace of God. Every thing Christ said in these verses can and should be preached today. What you see in these verses is what we call salvation by grace through faith without works and where is it found? Preached by Christ in the Four Gospels during his earthly ministry! This is New Covenant salvation.

You will not find this message or doctrine in the Law given to Moses. This is contrary to the law. The law never made such promises. This shows us again Christ did not follow

the letter of the Law in every thing he said or did. He said things the Law did not say and in these verses you find the foundational truths of the gospel of the grace of God. He is the first man who ever preached salvation and eternal life by faith alone without works. John was right when he said that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

This also shows us that Paul followed Christ's preaching when he wrote about salvation and eternal life by faith alone without works in his epistles. If you didn't know better you would think Paul wrote John 3:13-36.

Christ Preached Freedom from Eternal Condemnation

In John 5:24 Jesus said: **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.**

Jesus said once a person believes on him he has eternal life now and will not come into condemnation in the future. Condemnation is the same as the wrath of God. John 3:18 says those who do not believe on the Son are condemned and John 3:36 says the wrath of God abides on them. A person who is condemned will suffer the wrath of God. If you are free from condemnation you will not suffer the wrath of God. You may suffer the wrath of man for millions of saints have. You may suffer the wrath of Satan for millions of saints do, but never the wrath of God. Freedom from condemnation means you are saved from the wrath of God.

What is the wrath of God and where will the lost suffer the wrath of God?

(a) The wrath of God is poured out on the condemned in hell. Hell is one place where sinners suffer the wrath of God. That is why Christ warned people about hell throughout his ministry. In Matthew 10:28 he said; ***Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.***

(b) The wrath of God will be poured out on the condemned when Jesus comes in fire to take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel of Christ. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 says when Christ comes in flaming fire the lost will be ***punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.***

© The wrath of God will be poured out on the condemned in the lake of fire. The Lord said in Revelation 20:15 that ***whosoever is not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.***

Freedom from condemnation is deliverance from the wrath of God. If you are free from condemnation you will not suffer the wrath of God in hell. You will not suffer the fire and vengeance of God against the lost at Christ's coming and you will not suffer the everlasting torment of the lake of fire.

Paul preached freedom from condemnation and wrath also. In Romans 8:1 he wrote; ***There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.***

In Romans 5:9 he said: ***Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***

What Paul wrote was not a new revelation. Christ preached freedom from condemnation in his earthly ministry years before God saved Paul. Therefore, who did Paul learn this truth from? Christ. Much of what Paul preached was based upon what Christ preached before him. When Paul preached freedom from condemnation he was simply following what Christ preached in his earthly ministry.

Christ Preached the Necessity of the New Birth

In John 3 there is a conversation recorded between a man named Nicodemus and Christ. It says: ***There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.***

In these verses, Jesus defines the New Birth and why it is necessary. According to Jesus Christ the New Birth is a second spiritual birth. In verse 6 the Lord said: ***That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*** Your spirit is the little “s” and the Holy Spirit is the capital “S” in this verse. By the New Birth your dead spirit is made alive by the Holy Spirit. Paul calls the New Birth *regeneration* in Titus 3:5 and the *quickening of the spirit* in Ephesians 2:1.

The New Birth has something in common with your first birth. When a person is born of the flesh they receive from their earthly parents three things; their life which is temporal, their spirit and their nature which is corrupt. When a person is born again they receive three things from their heavenly Father; His life which is eternal. His Spirit which is Holy and his nature which is divine.

Why is the New Birth so important? Jesus said: ***Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water (first birth) and of the Spirit, (second birth) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*** You must be born again or born twice to enter into the kingdom of God. You must be regenerated and quickened by the Spirit and you must have the life, Spirit and nature of God in you to enter into the kingdom of God. The only alternative to the kingdom of God is hell or the lake of fire. That is why he said you **MUST** be born again. Without the new birth you will not and cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Because the inheritance of the church is the kingdom of God, God sent all of the apostles to preach the New Birth. They all wrote their epistles to people who were born again. This refutes the heresy taught by many cults that the New Birth is physical resurrection.

Those who Peter wrote to were born again. See 1 Peter 1:3, 23.

Those who John wrote were born again. See 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18.

Those who James wrote to were born again. See James 1:18

Those who Paul wrote to were born again. In Galatians 4:29 Paul wrote: ***But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.***

When Paul wrote his epistles there were people who were born of the Spirit who were persecuted by those who were born of the flesh only. Every Christian Paul wrote his epistles to were born after the Spirit and most of them were persecuted by those who were born after the flesh only. The same is true today. God's people all over this world who are born of the Spirit are being persecuted by lost people who are born after the flesh only.

When we preach the New Birth we are preaching a doctrine first preached by Christ in his earthly ministry and the Four Gospels gives us the clearest definition of the New Birth in all the Bible.

Christ Preached the Kingdom of God as the Inheritance of Believers

Luke 8:1 says: ***And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,***

Many dispensationalists make a big deal about Jesus preaching the kingdom of God. They say we cannot preach the kingdom of God like Jesus because the kingdom of God was promised to Israel and we have no claim to their promises. It's true that the kingdom of God was promised to Israel in the Old Testament. But is that any reason we cannot preach the kingdom of God today? What did Paul say about the kingdom of God? Did he say that because we are gentiles we have no inheritance in the kingdom of God? Did he say we should not preach the kingdom of God because Christ preached it in his earthly ministry? Did he leave the kingdom of God out of his writings and preaching because it was promised to Israel in the Old Testament? Did the kingdom of God have a part in the gospel and doctrine of Paul?

Paul's writings

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 Paul wrote to the church: ***As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.***

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5 ***So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:***

Paul's preaching

Acts 14:22: ***Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

Acts 19:8: ***And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of***

three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Acts 20:25: And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Acts 28:23: And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

Acts 28:31: Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

(Paul was a real “kingdom preacher” wasn’t he)

The Kingdom of God and the Gospel of Grace

Paul preached the kingdom of God at the same time he preached the gospel of grace. In Acts 20:24-25 Paul said; ***But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.***

When Paul preached the gospel of the grace of God (24) he also preached the kingdom of God (25). The kingdom of God is a part of the gospel of grace for a very good reason. The kingdom of God is the inheritance we receive when we believe the gospel of grace. (Acts 26:18)

The Kingdom of God and the Mystery

Part of the mystery of Ephesians 3:6 is that Gentiles like us have received an inheritance in the kingdom of God with the Jews to whom it was originally promised. Ephesians 3:6 says; ***That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.***

According to the mystery God revealed to Paul, Gentile believers are now fellow heirs with the Jews we were once divided from in time past by the middle wall of partition. Fellow heirs are fellows who have the same inheritance. God promised the kingdom of God as an inheritance to the Jews and part of the mystery of Ephesians 3:6 is uncircumcised Gentiles now share in that inheritance with them. Their inheritance is now ours by faith alone in the gospel of grace, without becoming Jewish proselytes, keeping the law or circumcision.

That is why Paul preached the kingdom of God with the gospel of grace. Part of the mystery is that we become heirs to the kingdom of God by faith in the gospel of grace. The kingdom of God is the future inheritance of the church and the highest position in the kingdom of God is to reign with Christ according to 2 Timothy 2:12.

It is obvious Paul followed Christ when he preached the kingdom of God. And he preached it more than any apostle. Search and see for yourself.

Christ Preached the Oneness of all Believers in Him

In John 14:18-20 Jesus said: ***I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.***

This is a promise Christ made to believers before he went back to heaven. It came to pass when the Spirit of Christ came into the world in Acts 2. From that time forward all believers are in Christ and Christ is in all believers.

In **John 17** is recorded the Lord's prayer for unity between himself and all believers. Notice his petitions to his Father.

Verse 21

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Verse 22

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Verse 23

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Verse 26

And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Notice the requests for unity in this prayer

That they all may be one.

They may be one in us.

That they may be one even as we are one.

I in them, and thou in me.

That they may be perfect in one.

That thy love may be in them and I in them.

This prayer for unity was answered when the Spirit of Christ came into the world in Acts 2. This is how and when all believers are joined together in one body. The Spirit of Christ links us together. This is why the church is called the *body of Christ*. It's called his body because he lives in us and we in him. Because all believers from Acts 2 forward have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, all believers are one body in Christ. We are all linked together by the Spirit of Christ who dwells in us all.

And where do we learn that all believers would become one and all believers would be in Christ and Christ would be in all believers? The Four Gospels. The oneness of believers was preached by Christ in the Four Gospels. What Paul wrote about the oneness of believers in his epistles is based upon what Christ said in the Four Gospels.

Christ Instituted the Lord's Supper

In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Paul wrote: ***For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.***

Paul said that what he wrote about the Lord's Supper *he received from the Lord*. The Lord gave Paul this revelation concerning the Lord's Supper. In these verses, he gives us a full revelation of the Lord's Supper and instructions to observe it.

What does the bread and cup represent? The bread represents his body that was broken for us. The cup represents his blood that was shed for us.

How long should we observe the Lord's Supper? We are told to observe it till the Lord comes again.

What do we show when we observe the Lord's Supper? We shew the Lord's death till he comes.

Why should we observe it? Two times the Lord says; This do in remembrance of me.

Every time the church observes the Lord's Supper it is observing a memorial instituted by Christ in his earthly ministry. The first Lord's Supper was observed by Christ and the 12 apostles in the Four Gospels in Matthew 26:26-29.

Many dispensationalists have a problem with the Lord's Supper. Some of them do not observe it. I have actually seen them get up and walk out of a service or go and sit in the back pew in defiance of it. It's amazing because these are the same people who tell us to follow Paul, but when it comes to the Lord's Supper they turn their back on Paul and the Lord too. Why? Because it is found in the Four Gospels which they say is not doctrine for the church and because it is a memorial of the New Covenant. They say that because the New Covenant was made with Israel we cannot observe it. But, is the church Israel? No. Did Paul tell us to observe it? Yes. Was Paul confused about Israel and the church? No. Then why did he tell the church to observe the Lord's Supper when he knew it was a memorial of the New Covenant God made with Israel? Because Paul knew something many dispensationalists are blind to, reject, and will not accept: It's the undeniable fact that we have been made partakers of the New Covenant.

Romans 15:27 says: ***It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their (Israel's) spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.***

Gentile believers like us have been made partakers of Israel's spiritual things and one of them is the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant.

Galatians 3:27-29 says; ***For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

Being baptized into Christ we become Christ's. Because we are Christ's we are counted as Abraham's seed. Being counted his seed we become heirs to the promise and promises God made to his seed and one of those promises is the New Covenant.

Ephesians 2:11-13 says: ***Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.***

These verses describe our past and present history. In time past we were strangers from the covenants of promise. Why? Because we were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel to whom the covenants of promise were made. The greatest covenant he made with them was the New Covenant. But, according to verse 13 now that we are in Christ we are made nigh to the covenants of promise. The New Covenant that was originally made with Israel has become ours now in Christ by the gospel. What was theirs by promise has become ours by grace.

This explains why God made Paul a minister of the New Covenant. In 2 Corinthians 3:6 he wrote: ***Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter (Old Testament), but of the spirit (New Testament): for the letter (Old) killeth, but the spirit (New) giveth life.***

In view of all these facts, it is obvious why we should observe the Lord's Supper. We are partakers of the New Covenant and Paul our apostle was a minister of the New Covenant and the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the New Covenant. The bread of the Lord's Supper calls to our remembrance Christ's body that was broken for us on the tree. The cup of the Lord's Supper causes us think about and be thankful for the blood he shed for our sins.

I find it astonishing that there are people today who talk so much about following Paul who turn their back on the Lord's Supper and even teach people not to observe it! These people are going to have a hard time at the judgment trying to explain their disobedience to the Lord. Can you imagine a Christian standing before the one whose body was broken for them and whose blood was shed for them trying to explain why he refused to partake of the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper that represents his body and blood? Can you imagine a preacher standing before Jesus Christ at the judgment seat of Christ and trying to explain to him why he told people not to observe the Lord's Supper even though it is a memorial of his death and shed blood? It's no wonder Paul said that day will be a day of terror to some people in 2 Corinthians 5:11. Don't tell people you follow Paul if you do not observe the Lord's Supper. Don't be a hypocrite and criticize those who do not follow Paul, if you refuse to observe the Lord's Supper either!

Christ Preached the Security of Believers

Why do we believe in security today? Why do we believe that once a person is saved, they are kept saved? The main reason is because of the cross. It is because of the cross that we have eternal security. We believe that because Christ died and shed his

blood for our sins that our sins are paid for in full. His death and shed blood satisfied all of God's just demands against our sins. His death on the cross paid the full penalty for all our sins. God laid on him the iniquity and sins of us all and Christ suffered, bled and died for every one of them. The wages or penalty of sin is death and by dying in our place, he paid the penalty for us.

If he paid the penalty for our sins that means we will never have to pay the penalty for them. If God punished Christ for our sins he can't punish us for them again for that would be double jeopardy. Double jeopardy is punishing a man twice for the same crime. If God punished Christ for our sins he can't turn around and punish us again in hell for them.

As far as God is concerned when Christ died on the cross we died with him. His death is counted as ours. When God poured out his wrath on him, it is as if God poured out his wrath on us for we were identified with him in death. Once we believed the gospel his death is put to our account and God cannot condemn us again for he has already condemned us in the person of Christ.

We have read the verses in the Four Gospels where Christ said he would die and shed his blood for our sins. He said it many times. If we have eternal security because of his death and shed blood, we should be able to find security in the Four Gospels. If we find the cross in the Four Gospels we should find security also. We should be able to find Christ saying that once a person believes on him he is secure from future punishment in hell or condemnation in the lake of fire. Can we find such a promise? Yes!

John 5:24

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Here is an absolute promise that those who believe in him shall not come into condemnation. There is no possibility they will be condemned. It cannot happen. Why? Because Christ was condemned for us on the cross. It only stands to reason that if God condemned Christ for our sins, he can't turn around and condemn us for them again. This is why we believe in eternal security.

Paul learned the truth of eternal security from Christ. That is why he said in Romans 8:1: ***There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*** If you are in Christ God cannot condemn you because Jesus Christ was condemned in your place.

John 10:27-31 says: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

If you could perish in hell after God gave you eternal life then Jesus lied for he said I give unto them eternal life and they shall NEVER perish. Once God gives you eternal life you cannot, and will not ever perish. Never means never. If you have eternal life there is no chance that you will perish in hell. Christ made this promise to us in the Four

Gospels.

He also said no man can pluck a believer out of his hand or his Father's hand. Once God takes you into his hand you are safe and secure for eternity. In these five verses the Lord said if you believe on me you will never perish and no man can pluck you out of his hand. That is an absolute guarantee of salvation.

John 6:37-40 says:

Vs. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Vs. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Vs. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Vs. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

According to verse 37 once a person comes to Christ, and belongs to Christ he will not be cast out of Christ. In verse 39 every person God gives to Christ, he keeps and he will not lose them. It's not up to us to keep from losing Christ. It's up to him to keep from losing us. And he has never and will never lose one person God gave him. In verse 40 we see why he will not lose anyone the Father gave him and why they cannot be cast out of Christ. It's because they have everlasting life. If you could be cast out of Christ you never had everlasting life. If Christ could lose you, you never had everlasting life. Everlasting life is never ending life with God in the kingdom of God. If it could end, be forfeited, or be denied, it was never ever lasting to begin with.

Jesus Christ is the first person who preached that sinners could have everlasting life by believing on him. He is the first who said that once you believe on him you will not come into condemnation. He is the first who said that once you believe on him you will never perish and that no man can pluck you out of his hand. Christ in his earthy ministry preached eternal security because he said he would die in the place of sinners. It's because of his death on the cross that Christ could make these statements about security. (Eternal security does not rule out chastisement)

Christ Preached and Prophesied of the Present Ministry of the Holy Spirit

One of the most important promises Christ made in the Four Gospels was the promise of the Holy Spirit. Before he left this world he made a promise to his apostles that the Holy Spirit would take his place in the world and continue what he started.

In John 16:7 Jesus said; ***It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you***

These words were spoken by Jesus Christ just before he went back to heaven to be with his Father. He made a promise to send the Holy Spirit into the world to take his place during his long absence from the world and to continue with the ministry he started while in the world. This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit began his special ministry in the world as Christ concluded his.

He became the ambassador of Jesus Christ in this world and he will perform his special ministry in the world till the second coming of Christ.

In the Four Gospels Christ defined the present ministry of the Holy Spirit. He told us exactly what he would do.

A Comforter

John 14:16-17 ***"I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter"***.

God sent the Spirit into the world and into our hearts to comfort us. One of the main ministries of the Holy Spirit is to comfort the saints. When Jesus Christ was in the world he was the comforter, but when he left the world, the Spirit became the Comforter. In every age the saints need comfort and that includes us for as long as we are in the world we will suffer tribulation according to John 16:33. The Holy Spirit in us will comfort us through any tribulation we may suffer.

A Teacher

John 14:26 ***"He shall teach you all things"***.

When Jesus Christ was in the world, he was the Great Teacher, but now the Holy Spirit has taken his place as our Teacher. Part of his ministry is to teach the saints for what God wants us to know cannot be understood by the spirit of man. The things of God are taught by the Spirit of God and no man can know the things of God without the Spirit of God who is God's teacher. (See 1 Cor.2:11, 1 John 2:27)

A Prosecutor

John 16:7-11 ***"He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"***.

A prosecutor is a person who accuses criminals of crimes and wrong doing and sees to it they are punished by a legal tribunal. His job is to prove to the court and the judge that the accused is guilty and deserves to be punished for his crimes. This is one of the jobs the Holy Spirit has been given to do in this world. No one can convict sinners like the Holy Spirit and before true conversion there must be Holy Spirit conviction. Without Holy Spirit conviction there is only false conversion.

A Prophet

John 16:13 ***"He will shew you things to come"***.

A Prophet is a man who predicts the future accurately. He shows you things to come. During his earthly ministry Christ was the Prophet of God and he predicted the future. Christ's prophecies of things to come are recorded in the Four Gospels and especially in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. Today the Holy Spirit is the Prophet of God and his prophecies of things to come are recorded in the epistles of the apostles and they are identical with Christ's. They both prophesied of the same events such as the second coming of Christ and their prophecies do not conflict.

A Glorifier

John 16:14 ***"He shall not speak of himself, he shall glorify me"***.

The main ministry of the Holy Spirit in this world is to glorify Jesus Christ. As Christ glorified his Father while on earth, the Spirit now glorifies the Son. To glorify someone

means to praise them, honor them, magnify them and exalt them above all others. And no one glorifies Christ more than the Holy Spirit. He never calls attention to himself. His job is to point men to Christ alone.

A Regenerator

John 3:3-8 ***"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit".***

The new birth is a second birth. It's when your spirit is quickened and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Why do you need a second birth? Because your first birth will not get you into the kingdom of God. When you born the first time you inherited the spirit of your parents which was dead, their nature which was corrupt and their life which is temporal. This disqualifies you from entering into the kingdom of God. But when a person is born again they receive the Spirit of God their new Father which is Holy, his Nature which is divine and his Life which is eternal. This qualifies you to enter into the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit is one of the great gifts of God to the church and throughout the Four Gospels Christ promised and prophesied of his ministry in our world today. What we know about the Holy Spirit we learned from Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels. No one can have a full understanding of the Holy Spirit and his ministry today if they ignore the Four Gospels. Paul learned about the ministry of the Holy Spirit from Christ's teaching about the Holy Spirit in the Four Gospels.

Christ Preached unto the Gentiles

Many dispensationalists have a problem believing this is true because of a verse in Matthew 15 where he said *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* (Matt.15:24) Many believe this verse proves he did not go to gentiles. It's true he came to preach the gospel to the Jews first which he did. But there is a reason he was sent to them first and it's the same reason the apostles went to them first. In Romans 1:16 Paul wrote: ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.***

Why did Paul preach the gospel of Christ to the Jews before the gentiles? In Romans 3:1-2 he tells us why. He wrote: ***What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*** The oracles of God is the word of God. The word of God in this verse was the Old Testament. The Old Testament gave the Jews advantages gentiles did not have. What were they? In Romans 9:4-5 Paul shows us their advantages: ***Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.***

The Jews were the covenant people and the promise people. Every covenant and promise God ever made in the Old Testament was made to them. This is what gave them their advantages. And this is why the word of God was always preached to them first. They had a scriptural right to hear the word first because of the covenants and promises God made to them in the word.

In Acts 13:46 Paul said to the Jews in Antioch: ***Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.***

It was necessary for him to preach to the Jews first because of Romans 9:4-5. But even though it was necessary for the Jews to hear the word preached first, did this stop Paul from going to the gentiles? No. When the Jews rejected it he immediately went and preached to the gentiles.

Just because Jesus said he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel does this mean he did not go and preach to gentiles? No. The Bible clearly says that Christ went and preached unto the gentiles. In 1 Timothy 3:16 Paul wrote: ***And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.***

This verse not only says that Christ was God manifest in the flesh, but it tells us what he did when he became flesh. He preached unto the gentiles. He preached unto the gentiles because it was prophesied he would.

In Romans 15:8-12 it says: ***Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:***

Many dispensationalists stop reading here, but the circumcision is not the only people Christ preached to. Keep reading.

And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

The prophecies of Christ preaching to the gentiles were fulfilled in the Four Gospels. In Matthew 12:14-21 it says: ***Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; And charged them that they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.***

These verses plainly say that the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Christ preaching to the gentiles, shewing judgment to the gentiles and gentiles trusting in his name were fulfilled. Mark 3 is the cross reference to Matthew 12 and it gives us a more detailed description as to how and where this prophecy was fulfilled. Mark 3:6-10 says: ***And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples***

to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

The gentiles he preached to came to him from Tyre, Sidon, Idumaea and Galilee. Most of them were heathen gentiles and many worshipped idols. (See also Matt.4:13-16)

Notice he went to the gentiles after the Jews held a council to kill him. When the lost sheep of the house of Israel rejected his message, he turned to the gentiles. Paul did likewise. Both Christ and Paul were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but they both went to the gentiles when the sheep refused to hear. (Paul carried Christ's gentile ministry to the ends of the earth. See Acts 13:46, Romans 15:16-21)

In His Earthly Ministry Christ Claimed To Be the One and Only Way to God

In John 14:6 **Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

The definite article "the" is used three times in this verse. He is not a way or one of many ways. He is "the way" meaning there is no other way. Way to who? God. He said no man cometh unto the Father but by me. There are a number of ways to look at this statement.

Dispensationally

Christ is the way to God, not Moses or the Law as the Jews thought. They believed the way to God was by keeping Moses Law, but Jesus said to them *I am the way and no man cometh to the Father, but by me.* He placed himself above Moses and the Law. That is why they hated him. They thought he was a blasphemer for saying this. He said this in view of abolishing the Law of Moses by his death in Matthew 26:26. By abolishing the Law the Jews were left with no other way to God, but through Jesus, but the majority of them still chose the abolished law instead of the living Son of God, and still do.

Doctrinally

Christ is the only way to God because he is the one and only mediator between God and man.

1 Timothy 2:5 says: ***For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.***

When Jesus said no man cometh unto the Father but by me he was making the same claim as Paul made of him. John 14:6 is a claim to being the one and only mediator between God and man and Jesus made this claim years before Paul was saved.

Evangelically

In Act 4:12 Peter said: **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none**

other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Salvation is narrowed down to one person by Peter in this verse. Christ is not one of many ways to be saved; he is the only way to be saved. He is not one of many men who can save; he is the only man who can save. He is the one and only man in heaven and earth that can save sinners. All other saviors are imposters, liars, thieves, crooks, and false Messiahs.

John 14:6 is one of the greatest verses in the New Testament that proves beyond a doubt that Jesus Christ is the one and only way to God and the one and only way to be saved, but yet many hyper dispensationalists tell us that doctrine for the church is not found in the Four Gospels!

Christ Confirmed the Promises Made Unto the Fathers

Romans 15:8 says: **Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:**

Many dispensationalists make a big deal out of the fact that in his earthly ministry Christ confirmed the promises made unto the Jewish fathers. They would have us to believe this proves he had nothing to say to gentiles in his earthly ministry. I have heard them use this verse to prove we cannot “follow the earthly ministry of Christ”. They say verse 8 sums up Christ’s earthly ministry, but many fail to read the next four verses which say: **And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.**

And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. (Rom.15:9-11)

Romans 15:8 does not sum up the earthly ministry of Christ. Confirming the promises God made to the fathers of Israel is not the only thing Christ was sent to preach. He was sent to gentiles also. Verse 8 does not exclude gentiles for it was prophesied that gentiles would believe on Christ according to these verses and they did. 1 Timothy 3:16 plainly says Christ preached unto the gentiles and they believed on him.

What the majority of dispensationalists overlook today is the fact that the promises Christ confirmed in his earthly ministry, were also confirmed and preached by Paul also to the gentiles!

In Galatians 3:16 Paul said: ***Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.***

In Galatians 3:29 he wrote: ***And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

According to Paul because we are Christ’s, gentiles like us are counted as the seed of Abraham. Being the seed of Abraham makes us heirs to the promise and promises God made to Abraham who is one of the fathers of Romans 15:8.

Therefore, Paul confirmed the same promises as Christ. Both Christ and Paul confirmed the promises God made to Abraham and his seed. Romans 15:8 does not exclude gentiles. The father of Romans 15:8 is now our father and we are counted as his seed to whom the promises were made. Israel’s promises have become our promises.

The promises Paul and Christ confirmed

The Gospel of Christ
Christ living in us and us in him
Hope of resurrection
God our Father
Inheritance in the Kingdom of God
The indwelling Spirit of God
Justification by faith
Righteousness by faith
Citizenship in the heavenly city New Jerusalem
Freedom from the law
A New nature
A New Birth
A divine Great High Priest
All sufficient, once for all sacrifice for sin
A divine heavenly mediator
An eternal heavenly intercessor
A heavenly hope
A heavenly temple
A divine mercy seat and propitiation
A divine spiritual altar
Divine Spiritual understanding
Eternal salvation
Eternal redemption
A heavenly calling
A throne of mercy and grace
Reconciliation for sin
Spiritual blessings
Heavenly citizenship
Peace of God
The grace of God
Adoption as children
Habitation of God
Light and salvation

These are just some of the promises God made unto the fathers that both Christ and Paul confirmed. The only difference is that a Jew received them by covenant, we receive them by grace.

The reason why God made us gentiles partakers of the promises God made to the fathers is simply because we had none of our own. According to Romans 9:4-5 all the promises were made to the seed of Abraham. God did not make any promises to gentiles who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We were strangers from the covenants of promise being aliens from Israel according to Ephesians 2:12.

If God did not make us partakers of their promises we would have none!!

There are many dispensationalists who deny they are the seed of Abraham, but that is

ridiculous for the only people who have access to the promises such as the gospel, justification, hope and righteousness is the seed of Abraham. If you are not the seed of Abraham you have no access to the promises such as the sacrifice of Isaiah 53, justification by faith of Habakkuk 2, the Holy Spirit of promise of Joel 2, the hope of resurrection of Hosea 13:15, Isaiah 25:8, the kingdom of God of Daniel 2, the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31, ect ect

Read this carefully: The gospel by which we are saved was one of the promises God made to the fathers. Justification by faith was one of the promises God made to the fathers. Righteousness by faith was one of the promises God made to the fathers. The Holy Spirit was one of the promises God made to the fathers.

I know this is redundant, but do you see my point? The people in my church do. Recently when teaching this to my church I asked them this question: If we were not made partakers of the promises that God made unto the fathers what would happen to us? A man in my church said; we would end up in hell! He was exactly right.

One more time; the promises God made to the fathers in Romans 15:8 are now the promises of the church. Paul plainly says we are made partakers of their spiritual things in the same chapter they are mentioned in Romans 15:27. Paul's epistles are not disconnected from the Old Testament or the promises God made to Israel. If you disconnect Paul from the promises you disconnect the only hope that gentiles like us have of being saved! That is why I believe it is religious insanity to say we do not partake of the promises Christ confirmed in Romans 15:8.

Christ Promised Peace to Believers

In John 14:27 Jesus said: **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

When Christ left the world he committed his spirit and soul unto his Father, his body to Joseph to be buried, his clothes to the soldiers, his mother to John and his peace to his disciples. He didn't leave us silver and gold, but something much greater, his peace. The spiritual peace we have today came from Christ as promised by him in the Four Gospels.

The peace we have with God came from Christ

Romans 5:1 says: ***We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***

His death and shed blood satisfied all of God's just demands against our sins. Now that God's wrath is appeased we have peace with God. Our sin debt has been wiped clean by the death and shed blood of Christ. The wrath of God no longer abides upon us for Christ removed it on the cross. Instead of living under the threat of God's wrath, we live under his grace and peace.

Peace between Jews and gentiles in the church came from Christ

Ephesians 2:14 says: ***For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.*** A middle wall of partition separated the Jews and the gentiles for many years. It was the Law of Moses. The Law

forbad the Jews from having any contact with the gentiles. Over time it became an object of hatred between them. By his death and shed blood he abolished the Law of Moses. By abolishing the Law of Moses he removed the wall of division and hatred between the Jews and gentiles. We are no longer divided, but reconciled together in one body. Where there was once enmity between Jew and gentile there is now peace.

The peace of God comes from Christ

Philippians 4:7 says: ***And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***

It's through Christ Jesus we can have the peace of God as well as peace with God. We can have the peace of God at all times in our minds and hearts because Christ is at hand at all times to give us peace. If we commit our requests and needs to him in prayer with thanksgiving, he is at hand to answer them and give us peace about the things that trouble us.

In John 16:33 Jesus said: **These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**

There are two promises in this verse. Tribulation in the world and peace in Christ. As long as we are in the world we will have tribulation. When we got saved we inherited God's enemies and they will cause trouble and tribulation in our lives. But, in our tribulation and trouble we have a promise of peace from Christ. We will always have tribulation till the second coming of Christ. In fact it will intensify before he comes. You cannot escape it. But, we can have peace in the midst of our tribulation. In the Four Gospels Christ became flesh and suffered tribulation and trouble like us. He became acquainted with grief and sorrow. By first hand experience, he knows our greatest need is peace during our tribulation. Before he left the world he made these promises of peace. These promises will become more precious to us as we approach the last days. What Paul wrote about the peace of Christ is based upon the promises he made in the Four Gospels.

Christ Commanded Sinners to Repent When They Believed the Gospel.

Mark 1:14-15 says: ***Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.***

In Luke 13:3 Jesus said: ***I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.***

Repentance is a word that is misunderstood by most people. What is repentance? It does not mean that you clean up your life so that you become good enough for God to save. That's impossible for there is none righteous, no not one. ***It means you turn away from what ever it is in your life that prevents you from being saved.*** Lost people are lost because there is something in their life that hinders them from being saved. Consider your own life before you were saved. If you will look back over your life before you were saved you will see there was something in your life that kept you from being saved. And when you got saved you turned away from it.

The Jews had to turn from the works of the Law to be saved. (Gal.4:9) The gentiles had to turn from their idols to be saved. (1 Thess.1:9) My wife had to turn away from the works of the Catholic Church to be saved. As long as a Jew believed the Law could save him, he could not be saved by the gospel. As long as a gentile worshipped and served idols, he could not be saved by the gospel. As long as my wife believed that salvation was in the sacraments she could not be saved by the gospel.

These things are stumbling blocks to salvation. They hinder people from fully trusting Christ to save them. To say a person does not have to turn from these things is not only wrong, but deceitful. Repentance has always and will always be a part of the gospel of salvation. Jesus Christ preached that he would die and shed his blood for sinners in the Four Gospels, but at the same time he commanded sinners to repent and believe the gospel. So did the prophets and all of the apostles.

Ezekiel the prophet said: **Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.** Ezk.14:6

Luke 24:45-47 says: **Then opened he their (12 apostles) understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

In Acts 17:30-31 Paul said: **And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**

In Acts 20:21 Paul said **he testified both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.** And according to verse 24 he preached repentance at the same time he: **testified the gospel of the grace of God.**

In Acts 26:20 Paul said he: **Shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

Paul not only commanded men to repent, but told them to do works to prove they had repented just like John the Baptist. (See Matt.3:8) Christ and the apostles did not believe a person had saving faith until they brought forth fruit to prove they had repented. The Thessalonians did works that proved their repentance when they turned to God from their idols. (See 1 Thess.1:9) The Ephesians did like wise. (See Acts 19:17-20, 26.) Repentance has always been a part of the gospel of salvation. The people who were truly saved in the Bible repented, that is, they turned away from the thing that hindered them from being saved unto the true and living God. What Paul preached

about repentance is what Christ preached before him.

The Cross and Christ's Earthly Ministry

The cross of Christ is as much a part of his so called "earthly ministry" as his birth in Bethlehem and his Sermon on the Mount. In fact, it is the most important part of his "earthly ministry". You can't separate the crucifixion of Christ from the so called "earthly ministry of Christ recorded in the Four Gospels. Christ death and resurrection is recorded in all Four Gospels, plus the days he spent on earth after his resurrection.

I know this list is long, but take the time to read the following verses and at the end I have a question for you to consider.

Romans 4:25

Romans 5:6-10

Romans 5:18-19

Romans 8:3

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Ephesians 2:14-16

Ephesians 5:2

Ephesians 5:25

Philippians 2:5-8

Colossians 2:14-15

1 Timothy 1:15

1 Timothy 2:5-6

1 Timothy 3:16

2 Timothy 1:10

Titus 2:14

Hebrews

2:9-10

2:14-17

7:26-27

9:14-17

10:5-14

12:2-3

13:12-13

1 Peter 1:18

1 Peter 2:21-24

1 Peter 3:18

1 John 4:10

Matthew 20:28

Matthew 26:26-29

John 3:14-18

John 6:51

John 10:10-11

Isaiah 53:1-12

After reading these verses my question is; when did the events described in these verses take place? Was it during Christ's "heavenly ministry" or his "earthly ministry"?

Every thing you have just read took place during the “earthly ministry” of Christ recorded in the Four Gospels. These things did not happen after Christ went back to heaven. They all took place while he was still on this earth! They did not come to pass during the ministry of Paul, they all took place years before God ever saved Paul. All of the events, blessings, promises, found in these verses came to pass during the “earthly ministry” of Christ, but yet we hear people say we can’t follow Christ in his “earthly ministry” and doctrine for the church is not found in the Four Gospels where all of these events took place!

Do you realize that our salvation, justification and forgiveness of sins were all made possible by what Christ did on this earth, not what he did when he went back to heaven? We are saved and have eternal life because of the earthly ministry of Christ, not the heavenly ministry of Christ. And what Christ does in heaven today is what he started while on earth. His heavenly ministry is a continuation of his earthly ministry.

Consider these things:

It was in his “earthly ministry” recorded in the Four Gospels that:

- *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- *Christ was lifted up on the cross that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- *Christ came into the world that the world through him might be saved.
- *Christ abolished the Law of Moses by his death.
- *Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and gentile by his death.
- *Christ gave himself a ransom for our sins.
- *Christ died for our sins and was raised for our justification.
- *Christ made reconciliation for sinners.
- *Christ was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.
- *Christ condemned sin in his flesh.
- *Christ died for the ungodly.
- *God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- *We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.
- *Christ died for our sins and raised again the third day.
- *Christ made peace between sinners and God and between Jew and gentile.
- *Christ gave himself for his church.
- *Christ became the pattern of humility as recorded in Philippians 2:5-8.
- *Christ walked in love and gave himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor in Eph.5:2 for us to follow.
- *That the Law was nailed to the cross.
- *Christ came into the world to save sinners.
- *Christ was God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.
- *Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light.
- *Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
- *Christ tasted death for every man.

- *Became flesh and blood to destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.
- *Christ became flesh to be a merciful and faithful high priest to make reconciliation for our sins.
- *Christ purged our conscience from dead works and died for the sins of the Old Covenant saints.
- *Christ took away the first covenant and established a second covenant in its place.
- *Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever.
- *Christ offered one offering to perfect us forever.
- *Christ set the example to follow in the race God has given us to run.
- *Christ redeemed us by his blood as of a lamb without spot or blemish.
- *Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree.
- *Christ became our example of how we respond to our enemies.
- *Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God.
- *Christ became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.
- *Christ announced the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New.
- *Christ gave his flesh for the life of the world.
- *Christ the good shepherd laid down his life for the sheep.
- *Christ was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.
- *Christ soul was made an offering for our sins.
- *Christ made intercession for the transgressors.
- *Christ was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many.

These are the accomplishments of Christ's earthy ministry. These things did not come to pass after Christ went back to heaven and sat down at God's right hand. They all came to pass when he was still living on this earth. These are the major accomplishments of Christ's earthy ministry. This is what he came to do in his earthy ministry. This is why God sent his Son into the world. This why Christ became flesh and dwelt among us.

Do you see anything in his long list of earthly accomplishments that you cannot claim or preach today? These are the major doctrines of the church under grace. What we read in these verses is what Christ did for us while he was still on earth. These are the blessings and promises he sent his apostles to preach after his resurrection. They were sent to preach what he accomplished in his earthly ministry and we are saved by what he did for us in his earthly ministry, not his heavenly ministry.

It is ridiculous to say that Christ sent Paul to preach just the opposite of what he accomplished while on earth. It is also totally wrong to separate the so called "earthly ministry" of Christ from his "heavenly ministry". He has one ministry not two. The ministry of the apostles was to preach and explain to the world what Christ accomplished in his earthly ministry. His so called "heavenly ministry" is an extension of his "earthly ministry". What he did for sinners on earth he applies to them today from heaven. What he accomplished while on earth he proclaims today from heaven through the epistles of the apostles and those he calls to preach. Most of the major doctrines of salvation Paul wrote about are based directly upon what Christ did while he was still on this earth.

In His Earthly Ministry Christ Came to Save the World

1John 2:2 says: **And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**

1John 4:14 says: **And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.**

Christ's ministry was not limited to his own nation as many dispensationalists believe. His ministry was much wider. He came to be a light to the world, to die for the sins of the world, to be the Saviour of the world and not just Jews in Israel. John also wrote the book of John. Notice what he said about Christ and the world in the book of John.

John 1:29 **The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**

John 3:16-17 **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

John 4:42 **And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.**

John 6:33 **For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.**

John 6:51 **I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

John 8:12 **Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

John 9:5 **As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**

John 12:47 **And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.**

From these verses you can see that Christ did not come into the world to bless and save the Jews only. He came to save the whole world. He came into the world to be the Savior of us "red necks" in Alabama just like the Jews in Israel. His ministry was not limited to the Jews in Israel only as some people teach. The Four Gospels present Christ as the Savior of the whole world!

What John said about Jesus being the Savior of the world laid the foundation for Paul's ministry of reconciliation. In his earthly ministry Christ came to be the Savior of the whole world and sent men like Paul to tell the whole world they can be reconciled to God because of what he did for them while he was still in the world. Throughout the

world today God is reconciling both Jews and gentiles unto himself because of the sacrifice Christ offered for their sins while he was in the world. (See 2 Cor.5:18-19)
For the world to be reconciled to God their sins had to be paid for in full. Sin caused the breach, but the blood of Christ removed it. He came into the world to become sin for the whole world, that the world might be reconciled to God.
(See Colossians 1:20-22)

Christ Appeared as God Manifest in the Flesh

In 1 Timothy 3:16 Paul wrote: ***And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.***

This verse is one of the great verses in the Bible that plainly declares that Jesus Christ whom we serve and love is God. He is God manifest in a body of flesh. But when did he appear as God manifest in the flesh? Was it in his so called "heavenly ministry"? No. It was during his earthly ministry recorded in the Four Gospels he appeared as God manifest in the flesh. 1 Timothy 3:16 is a description of Christ's earthly ministry as God manifest in the flesh.

What Paul said about Christ in this verse can be seen throughout his earthly ministry recorded in the Four Gospels. In the Four Gospels we see Christ has all the divine attributes of God. There are five distinctive divine attributes that God alone possesses and in the Four Gospels Christ demonstrates them all.

(1) Omnipotence

In the Four Gospels Christ has all power. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said: ***All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.***

In his earthly ministry he demonstrated the power he had over all things.

Over nature – Matthew 8:24-27

Over sickness and disease – Matthew 4:23-24

Over Satan – Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14

Over death - 2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:14

(2) Omniscience

In the Four Gospels Jesus Christ revealed his omniscience.

****Christ knew men's lives even their secret history.***

John 4:16-19

****He knew the secret thoughts of all men.***

Matthew 9:3-4, 12:24-25, Luke 6:7-8, 9:21.

****Out of billions of fish in the sea he knew of a certain coin in a fish's mouth before the fish was caught.*** Matthew 17:27:

****He had knowledge about men before he met them.***

John 1:47-49

****He knew the location of things without ever seeing them.***

Mark 8:1-3

That is why Paul said in Colossians 2:3; ***In whom (Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.***

(3) Omnipresence

Only God has the ability to be everywhere at once, and Jesus claimed this ability.

In Matthew 28:20 he said to the apostles; ***Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*** If he is heaven and they on earth, how could he be with them if he was not omnipresent? (See John 14:18-20)

In Matthew 18:20 Jesus said; ***For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*** To make that statement he has to be omnipresent. Also compare Ephesians 1:20 with Colossians 1:27.

(4) Eternal

As God manifest in the flesh Christ is eternal.

Micah 5:2 says; ***But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*** This prophecy concerning the birth of the everlasting Son of God was fulfilled in Matthew 2:4-6. Jesus made many claims to being eternal in the Four Gospels.

*In John 8:56-58 he said; *Before Abraham was, I am.*

*In John 17:5 he said: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory *which I had with thee before the world was.*

*John 1:1 says; In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

(5) Immutable

God does not change, he is always the same. Christ does not change, he is always the same.

In Hebrews 13:8 Paul said; ***Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.***

In Hebrews 1:10-12 he wrote; ***And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.***

Only God has these five attributes and in his earthly ministry Christ demonstrated them all.

Jesus Christ was worshipped as God in the Four Gospels.

In Matthew 4:8-10 Jesus said: ***Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*** According to Christ's own words it is wrong, sinful, and illegal to worship any one but God. It is idolatry to worship any one other than God. Idolaters were stoned to death and any one who allowed men to worship them were stoned also. But Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh and for that reason he allowed men to worship him over and over again in the Four Gospels.

See Matthew 2:11, 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 18:26, 28:9, 28:17.

See Mark 5:6.

See Luke 24:52.

See John 9:38, 20:28.

After considering these facts about the deity of Christ what do you think about these people who say Church doctrine is not found in the Four Gospels or that a Christian cannot walk worthy of the Lord by following what Christ said and did in his earthly ministry? People who say such things do not know what spirit they are following. The Four Gospels magnify the deity of Christ and show us that everything it takes to be God, Jesus Christ had. It is in his earthly ministry that we see in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Col. 2:9)

Christ Preached and Warned Sinners about Hell

If Jesus Christ was on earth today and preached what he did in the Four Gospels he would be branded a “hell fire and damnation preacher”. No one in the Bible preached as much about hell then Jesus Christ.

Consider these verses:

Matthew 5:22: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 5:29-30 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 16:18: And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 18:8-9 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

Matthew 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Matthew 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Mark 9:43-48 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And

if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Luke 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Luke 16:22-24 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And 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.

We are told by many extreme dispensationalists that we cannot follow what Christ preached in his earthly ministry, but we should follow what Paul preached. I find this amusing because many of these same people preach about hell even though Paul does not mention it once in his epistles! If you preach about hell, and you should, you must follow what Christ preached in the Four Gospels. When you preach and warn men about hell you are not preaching a doctrine God revealed to Paul, but a doctrine that Christ and the prophets and apostles preached many years before Paul was saved.

The Four Gospels Reveal the Miraculous Birth of Christ

The Four Gospels record the birth of Christ in every detail.

The Four Gospels tell us where he was born:

Matthew 2:4-6 says: And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he (Herod) demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

The Four Gospels show how he was conceived:

Matthew 1:20 But while he (Joseph) thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

The Four Gospels reveal who his mother was and the kind of woman she was:

Luke 1:30-31 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

The Four Gospels describe the conditions surrounding his birth:

Luke 2:7: *And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

The Four Gospels show who announced his birth:

Luke 2:9-14 *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, (The shepherds) and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord..... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

The Four Gospels record the prophecies he fulfilled when he was born:

Matthew 1:22 *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

The Four Gospels tell us why he was born:

Matthew 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Luke 1:32-33 *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

The Four Gospels revealed his name before he was born:

Matthew 1:23 *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

Matthew 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Luke 1:35 *And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

Luke 2:11 *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Notice the names he was given in the Four Gospels: Emmanuel, Jesus, the Son of God, and the Saviour Christ the Lord. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were very careful to record every detail of the birth of Christ because it is as important as his death. His birth determined the effectualness of his sacrifice. They are careful to show us that Joseph was not the physical father of Christ. They make it clear that Christ is God's son conceived by God's Spirit in the womb of Mary. Therefore his birth was a miracle. He did not have a human father. His mother was a virgin who knew no man and his Father was God.

Why was he born that way? To be a **perfect** sacrifice for sinners. If Joseph was his real father he would have inherited his sinful nature. If Christ inherited Joseph's sinful nature,

he would not be a perfect sacrifice. If he was not a perfect sacrifice you would still be in your sins and on the way to hell with no hope of ever being saved. But because His Father was God and his mother was a virgin, he was born without sin and when he died, he died as a perfect, sinless, sacrifice for sinners. Hebrews 9:14 says; ***How much more shall the blood of Christ, who though the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*** This verse is true because of the virgin birth of Christ. Don't let someone tell you that the virgin birth is not important. Your salvation depends upon the virgin birth. If Joseph was his real father you are still lost because Christ would be a sinner like you and his death was meaningless.

Also every major doctrine of the church is based upon the cross of Christ. The sacrificial death of Christ is the foundation upon which every Church doctrine is built. But his sacrificial death is based upon his virgin birth for if he was not born of a virgin his death was meaningless and every doctrine we believe today is false. Now can you see how important the Four Gospels are. God inspired all four writers to record every detail of Christ's birth for every blessing and promise we have depends on it! No portion of scripture says as much about the virgin birth of Christ as the Four Gospels and the virgin birth of Christ is one of the major doctrines of the church.

The Four Gospels Declare the Sinless Life of Christ

Hebrews 4:15 says: ***For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.***

This verse refers to the earthly ministry of Christ and it tells us that for 33 1/2 years this world saw a flesh and blood man just like them who was tempted in all points like them, without once giving into temptation. In the Four Gospels Christ was tempted in all places like them, under all conditions and circumstances like them. He was tempted by the same world, flesh and devil as them, but not once did he sin. When he was tempted by the lust of the flesh, he overcame the lust of the flesh. When he was tempted by the lust of the eyes he overcame what the eyes lusted after. When he was tempted by pride he humbled himself and overcame the sin of pride. No man has ever been tempted as much as Jesus Christ. God allowed him to suffer temptation throughout his life so that his victory over it helps us when we are tempted.

If I am having a problem in my life I want someone who has had the same problem to help and advice me. Jesus Christ struggled with every temptation I have ever had, but he overcame them all. So now when I am tempted I can go to him and find a way to overcome my temptations. I don't need a self help book to overcome temptation. I don't need pills and drugs and patches to overcome temptation. What I need is a winner. A man who has a perfect record against temptation and there isn't but one, it's the man Christ Jesus.

The Four Gospels record the sinless life of Christ and the temptations and tribulations he endured during his life on earth. God inspired Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to record the temptations and tribulations of Christ and how he overcame them to

encourage us in our fight against temptation and tribulation. We can learn how to overcome temptation by following the example of Christ. When he was tempted 40 days and nights by the devil in Matthew 4 it says that every time the devil tempted him he quoted scripture. He said *it is written* three times and finally the devil left him alone. What does this teach us? If you want to overcome temptation and the devil you better know the scriptures and learn to quote them when the time comes.

We hear much about Christ's so called heavenly ministry today, but I remind you that it was in his earthly ministry, not his heavenly, that he overcame temptation and sin. That is why I don't believe a person can learn how to effectively overcome temptation without reading the Four Gospels because in them is found the only man who ever did.

Christ Taught us How To Treat our Enemies

In Matthew 5:38-44 Jesus said: ***Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.***

What the Lord said about our enemies was radically different from what most people believed in his day and ours also. Under the Law the Jews destroyed their enemies, but along came Christ and he said to love them, feed them and pray for them! This is one reason the people were astonished at his doctrine. These are radical words today because we live in a vengeful society. If our enemies hurt us the old flesh says get even with them. Kick them, beat them, sue them and kill them if you have to. That is why we have so many wars.

For years people have used these verses to try and prove we cannot apply doctrine from the Four Gospels to the church today. They say these verses are impossible for us to obey. But God has never asked his people to do what is impossible and what many Christians overlook or ignore is that Paul said the same thing in his epistles!

Concerning law suits Paul wrote: ***1 Corinthians 6:6-7 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?***

Concerning our enemies Paul wrote: ***Romans 12:17-21 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome***

of evil, but overcome evil with good.

What Paul wrote about law suits and the treatment of our enemies is exactly what the Lord preached in the Sermon on the Mount recorded in the Four Gospels. Paul learned this radical doctrine from the earthly ministry of Christ. What a shock this must have been to Paul when you consider what a vicious killer he was before he was saved. (Acts 26:9-11)

Christ Taught us How to Lay Up Treasure in Heaven

In Matthew 6:19 the Lord said: ***Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:***

I have heard a number of dispensationalists use this verse to prove we can't base church doctrine on the Four Gospels. They say that if we obeyed this verse today we could not have checking accounts, saving accounts or stocks or bonds. But is this what the Lord meant? Was he saying do not save your money or set money aside for future use? Of course not. The people who quote verse 19 to prove we can't obey this verse always fail to quote the next two verses which say: ***But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.***

These two verses define verse 19. The issue in these verses is our heart. A man's heart will be upon what he treasures most. If his treasure is in heaven, heaven will have his heart. If heaven has his heart he will use the treasures he has on earth for the sake of heavenly things.

We have a choice as to what we can do with our material possessions. We can hoard them up for ourselves, but if we do we stand a chance of losing them to moth, rust, thieves and the IRS. Or we can use our earthly wealth and possessions for spiritual things and by doing so we store up in heaven treasure that will last forever. In these verses the Lord is encouraging us to use our earthly treasures for his sake and if we do we have a promise from him that we will reap heavenly treasure and rewards that are eternal.

Throughout Paul's epistles he exhorts us to do like wise. .

In Colossians 3:1-2 he wrote: ***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.***

If a man has his affections on things above he will use what he has below for heavenly and spiritual reasons. If a man has his affections on the things of this world he will neglect heavenly things and use what he has for himself. Paul and Christ said the same thing about earthy and heavenly treasure.

In Philippians 4:15-17 he wrote: Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

Notice the Philippians had an account that grew as they gave to Paul their earthy things.

Where is that account? It's in heaven. By giving their earthly treasures to Paul they were building up treasure in heaven. There is no doubt but that Paul learned this truth from the Lord in Matthew 6.

Christ Preached the Blindness and Election of Israel

Many teach the blindness and fall of Israel took place in the Acts period even as far out as Acts 28 and that God was still "dealing with Israel" till Acts 28. This is bogus, for Christ said they were blinded during his ministry. In Matthew 13:13-15 he said: ***Therefore speak I to them (unbelieving Jews) in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.***

Notice carefully the Lord said that the prophecy Isaiah made concerning the blindness and fall of Israel (Isaiah 6) was **fulfilled** in the Four Gospels. Paul quotes these same verses in Romans 11 and Acts 28 but Jesus said they were **FULFILLED** in his day. The blindness and fall of Israel did not take place in Paul's day; it took place in the earthly ministry of Christ.

What Christ and Paul said about the blindness of Israel was the same. They both said the blindness was not total. It was in part. (Romans 11:25) In other words all Jews were not blinded and cast away. At the same time he pronounced the blindness of Israel he also revealed a believing remnant within the nation. In Matthew 21:43 Jesus said to the apostate blinded Jews: ***Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*** In Luke 12:32 Jesus said to his disciples: ***Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.***

By comparing these verses you can see the two groups of Jews in Christ's day. Those who were blinded and those who believed. In Romans 11 Paul also wrote about these same two groups of Jews. (Romans 11:7)

The believing Jews in Christ's day were the apostles and those who believed their gospel. They are called a little flock in Luke 12:32. Paul calls them the election of grace in Romans 11:5; the Israel of God in Galatians 6:16; the commonwealth of Israel in Ephesians 2:12; and Peter calls them a chosen generation in 1 Peter 2:9. Today we are one body with them according to Ephesians 2:12-16 and are grafted into the good olive tree with them in Romans 11:17 and with them partake of the root and fatness of the tree which are the spiritual blessings and promises God gave to Israel according to Romans 15:27.

Christ Warned of Persecution and Tribulation in the World

In John 16:33 he said: ***These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.***

There are two promises Christ made to us in this verse: His peace and tribulation in the world. As long as we are in this world the Lord said we will suffer tribulation. Tribulation is the forecast for all true believers. In chapter 15 he tells us why we can expect tribulation and persecution in the world. In John 15:18-20 he said:

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

The world hates us because it hates Christ. When you get saved you not only inherit the promises of God, but his enemies too. The world demonstrates it's hatred of God by persecuting the followers of Christ. If you are servant of Christ the world has put a "bull's eye" on you. You are a moving target for the world to shoot at. This world takes out its anger and hatred of Christ on his servants. This means that if Christ is your Lord you cannot expect this world to treat you better than him. If they persecuted the Lord, they will persecute his servants. If they lied about him, slandered him, maligned him, hated him, slapped him, beat him, spit on him and murdered him, then his servants can expect the same. Where did we ever get off thinking that the world will treat us better than Christ? This "no tribulation" doctrine is a lie and those who expect to escape the tribulation and persecution of their Lord are deceived. .

Paul was not deceived and he gave us the same warnings in his epistles. In Acts 14:22 Paul gathered the disciples together in Galatia and it says: ***Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

Paul said that tribulation will precede the kingdom of God and he warned that before we enter into the kingdom of God we will suffer much tribulation. Jesus said that in the world ye shall have tribulation and Paul echoed his words in this verse.

In 1 Thessalonians 3:2-4 Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica:

To establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Paul said we are appointed to suffer affliction and tribulation. The word appointed means: Fixed; set; established; decreed; ordained; constituted; allotted. Who decreed and ordained us to suffer tribulation? Jesus Christ throughout the Four Gospels. When he said in the world ye shall have tribulation that fixed it, decreed it, ordained it and constituted it to happen. You can't get out of it. Everything Paul wrote about tribulation was based upon what the Lord said about it in the Four Gospels.

In 2 Timothy 3:12 Paul wrote: ***Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*** Paul knew the godly would suffer persecution because the Lord said the godly shall suffer persecution throughout his ministry.

In Philippians 1:28-30 he wrote: ***And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.***

This is a remarkable verse for it says that suffering for Christ is a token or a sign of salvation. Escaping tribulation and persecution is not a sign of salvation. It's just the opposite: tribulation and persecution is the sign or token that a person is truly saved. It's the godly who suffer tribulation. (2 Tim.3:12) All of this goes back to what the Lord said about suffering and tribulation in the Four Gospels. Paul followed Christ's words precisely concerning the issue of tribulation. Paul never once said we are saved from tribulation. We are saved from God's wrath (1 Thess.5:9) but not tribulation. No saint of God in the past, present or future will ever suffer the wrath of God, but we are all appointed and ordained to suffer tribulation. And the tribulation can be very severe when you consider how they persecuted and murdered our Lord.

Christ Promised to Reward Those Who Suffer For Him

The Lord not only predicted tribulation for the saints, but he also promised a reward in heaven to those who suffered tribulation for his sake.

In Matthew 5:10-12 he said: ***Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.***

In Luke 6:22-23 it is written: ***Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.***

Albert Barnes commented on these verses by writing: *To those who suffer most, God imparts the highest rewards. Hence, the crown of martyrdom has been thought to be the brightest that any of the redeemed shall wear; and hence many of the early Christians sought to become martyrs, and threw themselves in the way of their persecutors, that they might be put to death. They literally rejoiced, and leaped for joy, at the prospect of death for the sake of Jesus. Though God does not require us to seek persecution, yet all this shows that there is something in salvation to sustain the soul which the world does not possess. Nothing but the consciousness of innocence, and the presence of God, could bear up the sufferers in the midst of these trials; and the flame, therefore, kindled to consume the martyr, has also been a bright light, showing the truth and power of the gospel of Jesus.*

Many of the martyrs Barnes wrote about were killed during the reign of Queen Bloody Mary of England. Why were these people so eager to become martyrs? Because of the promise the Lord made in these verses. Read the history of some of these martyrs and you will see they loved the Lord and coveted the reward he promised in heaven to those

who suffered for him in this life. These are the verses that motivated them to become martyrs.

Paul also wrote of the reward God promised to those who suffer for Christ. In 2 Timothy 2:11-12 he said: ***It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.*** All believers will live with Christ in the kingdom of God, but those who suffer for him will also reign with him.

In Revelation 3:12 the Lord made the same promise to the saints in the churches of Asia. He said in Revelation 3:21: ***To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.***

Christ said we will have tribulation in the world. He said the world will persecute us as they persecuted him. But he made two promises to those who suffer. He promised to give us peace in the midst of our tribulation. (John 16:33) And he promised to reward those who suffer (Matthew 5:10-12, 2 Timothy 2:12). He also said the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18). In the kingdom of God there will be differing degrees of glory (1 Cor.15:41-42) and those who suffer will have a greater magnitude of glory than others.

Christ Preached the Hope of the Church

Before we look at the Four Gospels let's first read what Paul says about the coming of Christ for the Church in his epistles. By doing so we will see that both Paul and Christ spoke and wrote about the same coming, resurrection and hope.

In 1 Thessalonians 4 when describing the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the saints he said in verse 15: ***For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord.***

What Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4 about Christ's coming and the resurrection of the saints is based upon what the Lord said in his word. It was not something new or different for it was according to what the Prophets said in the word of God. Some say the *word of the Lord* is not what the Lord said in the Old Testament, but what the Lord said to Paul orally by revelation. But, what saith the scriptures? Is the word of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 the word the Lord spoke to Paul orally or is it the word of the Lord written down in the Prophets? Paul gives us the answer in no uncertain terms in **1 Corinthians 15:50-57**. When writing about the hope of the church he said: ***Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.***

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

According to these verses the coming of Christ for the church and the resurrection of the saints will fulfill prophecy. Old Testament prophecies will come to pass and be fulfilled when the Lord comes for the church. They plainly say that when the dead are raised and those who are alive escape without dying: ***THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?***

Paul is quoting **Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14**. He plainly says that when the Lord comes and the saints are resurrected, the prophecies of these two Prophets will come to pass. Therefore, *the word of the Lord* in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 is what the Lord said in the Prophets; Isaiah and Hosea. Notice also Paul said that when the resurrection of 1 Corinthians 15 takes place **then**, and not later these prophecies will come to pass. In other words, this resurrection is a one time event that will be fulfilled once for all time when the Lord comes again.

Some will object and say that the coming of Christ and the resurrection in these verses cannot be in the Prophets because he says it is a mystery in verse 51. But Paul does not say that the coming of Christ and the resurrection in these verses was a mystery. Look at what he really said:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

The mystery is not the coming of Christ or the resurrection. The mystery is those who are alive when the Lord comes will never die. But this mystery is like many others, it is found in the Old Testament and in the Four Gospels. When the prophets said; ***O grave where is thy victory?*** they wrote of the dead in Christ who will be raised victorious over the grave. When the prophets said; ***O death where is thy sting?*** they wrote of those who will be alive when Jesus comes and will never die. They will never taste the sting of death.

Both the resurrection of the dead from the grave and the transformation of the saints who are alive at Christ's coming and will never die, were prophesied by the prophets. But prior to Paul the general belief was that all saints would be dead by the time the Lord comes again. But Paul shows us that some saints will be alive and will never die and he quotes the prophets to prove it by saying; ***O death where is thy sting.*** This is a promise to those believers who are alive when Christ comes again. The promise is they will never taste the sting of death. (I hope to be one of them, how about you?)

The Four Gospels

In John 11 Jesus told Martha that certain saints who believed on him would never die also. After Lazarus died she came to Jesus and it says: ***Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.***

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

John 11:21-26

When the Lord told Martha that her brother would be raised from the dead she understood what he was saying. But then Jesus said something else she did not understand or know. He went on to say; ***And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?***

When the Lord said *whosoever liveth and believeth in me* in the context he was speaking of believers who are alive at the resurrection of the last day. The Lord said they will never die. From what we see in these verses Martha knew about the resurrection of the dead, but did not understand that believers alive at his coming would never die. The reason she did not understand is because it was a mystery according to 1 Corinthians 15:51. But Paul reveals this mystery more fully in his epistles. But he does so out of the prophets who said: ***O death where is thy sting?***

This means Paul preached the same coming of Christ and resurrection of saints that the prophets, Jesus Christ and the other apostles preached. There is one hope in the Bible according to Ephesians.4:4. Paul called it the Hope of Israel in Acts 28:20 and the blessed hope in Titus 2:13. Some may object and say how can the church partake of the resurrection God promised to Israel in the Old Testament? The answer is simple: The Church already partakes of Israel's: ***Gospel, Justification, Righteousness, Spirit, New Birth, Heavenly City, Father, New Covenant, God, Christ, High Priest, Mediator, Intercessor, Adoption, Mercy Seat, Sacrifice etc***

If the church partakes of all these blessings and promises originally made to Israel, why is it hard to believe we partake of their Hope? Romans 15:27 clearly says we partake of Israel's spiritual things and one of them is their hope of resurrection. In Acts 28:20 Paul tells us in no uncertain terms that the resurrection he preached was the Hope of Israel. In fact he was put in jail for preaching it. Ephesians 2:12-13 tells us that in time past gentiles like us were not only without Israel's Christ, Covenants, and God, but we were without their Hope also. But verse 13 shows us this is no longer true. We have been made nigh to Israel's' Hope as well as their Christ, Covenants and God.

In Paul's epistles and the Four Gospels, the hope of all believers is:

The second coming of Christ

Matt.24:30 - 1 Cor.1:7, 1 Cor.15:23,
1 Thess.4:15

In the clouds

Matt.24:30 - 1 Thess.4:17

With his angels and saints

Matt.24:31, Jude 14 - 1 Thess.3:14,
1 Thess.4:16, 2 Thess.1:7

At the last trumpet

Matt.24:29,31 - 1 Cor.15:52, 1 Thess.4:16

With a loud voice

John 5:25-28 - 1 Thess.4:16

Sudden and unexpected

Matt.24:42-44 - 1 Cor.15:52, 1 Thess.5:2

The saints of all ages gathered and resurrected

Matt.24:31 - 1 Thess.4:16, 1 Cor.15:22-23, 2 Thess.2:1

Those alive are caught up without dying

Matt. 25:5-13, John 11:25-26 - 1 Cor.15:51,
1 Thess.4:17

Preceded by an apostasy and the revelation of the antichrist

Matt.24:5-27 - 2 Thess.2:1-8, 1 Tim.4:1

Followed by wrath upon the lost

Luke 17:26-30 - 2 Thess.1:7-10

The coming of Christ found in the Four Gospels is identical with his coming in Paul's epistles. This of course means Christ preached the hope of the Church long before Paul was saved and what Paul wrote about the coming of Christ was based upon what the Prophets and Christ said before him.

The following is from Arthur W. Pink comparing what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 with what the Lord said in John 14:1-3.

"The one Scripture which sets forth more fully than any other the order of events which shall occur at the return of Christ for His saints, is found in 1 Thessalonians 4. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord!" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

In this passage three things claim special notice: first, the descent of the Lord Himself; second, the resurrection of the sleeping saints; third, the translation to heaven of those believers which shall be alive on the earth at that time.

We would call attention to the close relation the above passage bears to our Lord's words as recorded in the opening verses of John 14 — "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). There is a four-fold correspondence between these two passages.

The Savior said: "I will come again;" Paul wrote, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven."

The Savior promised, "I will receive you unto Myself;" Paul declared that the saints shall be "caught up together to meet the Lord in the air."

The Savior promised, "Where I am, there ye may be also;"

Paul assures us, "So shall we ever be with the Lord."

The Savior prefaced His gracious promises by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled;" Paul the apostle concludes by saying "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

There can surely be no questions that these passages, running so closely parallel relate to the same event. How wonderful is the verbal agreement of Holy Writ! How the comparison of one passage with another, brings out the unmistakable unity of the Scriptures." By comparing these verses together there is no denying the fact that Christ and Paul preached the same coming and resurrection.

Christ Came To Build His Church

Matthew 16:15-18 says: ***He (Christ) saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

During his ministry on earth Christ made a major announcement. He said he was going to build a church which he calls "my church". For years I have heard people say that Christ came to build a kingdom, but he said he was going to build his church. People have debated for years as to whether or not this church is the body of Christ. Many dispensationalists (dry and wet) say it is not, because they believe the body of Christ was a mystery never revealed before God saved Paul. Even Baptists like Ruckman say this is a future church that does not exist today just like Bullinger, Welsh and many hyper dispensationalists teach. But, the fact is, the body of Christ is **never** called a mystery. Search and see for yourself. Paul said that before he was saved he persecuted the Church of God that he later wrote epistles to and ordained elders in and he called it the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:27. The mystery is how gentiles like us got into the church and our relationship with the Jews who were in it before us. (Eph.3:6)

Considering what Christ said about the members of this church it's obvious the church he said he would build is his body. From what we have seen in the Four Gospels this is what we learn about the church Christ said he would build.

(1) The members of Christ's church are saved by his death and shed blood.

Christ said he would lay down his life for his church and give himself a ransom for his church. He was lifted up on the cross for his church. Its sins are forgiven by his blood.

This is the church that Christ loved and gave himself for in Ephesians 5:25. His church derives every benefit and blessing from his death and shed blood. It is ridiculous to say the church Christ built was not saved, justified and forgiven by the blood he shed in the Four Gospels as some hyper dispensationalists teach.

(2) Christ's church is saved by faith alone without works according to John 3 and John 5.

The promises of John 3 and John 5 were written to the church Christ said he would build.

(3) Christ's church is free from eternal condemnation.

It will not come into condemnation because Christ was condemned in its place according to John 5:24. The "no condemnation" promise was made to the church Christ built.

(4) Christ's church is eternally secure.

Nothing or no one can pluck the church out of Christ's hands. His church will never perish. It cannot come into condemnation, and it has everlasting life. That is why the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church Christ built.

(5) Christ's church partakes of the blessings of the New Covenant as described by Paul in Hebrews.

(6) Christ is the Great High Priest, Mediator, Intercessor, and Propitiation of this church.

He became all these things to his church in his earthly ministry and continues to be so today.

(7) By his death Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile believers in his church. In its beginning it was a majority Jewish church, but later the door of faith was opened to uncircumcised gentiles in Acts 10 (Cornelius) and through the ministry of Paul. (Acts 13-14) This is the mystery concerning the church. Through Paul's ministry the door of faith was opened to uncircumcised gentiles into the church Christ built. They enter in without becoming Jewish proselytes or works of any kind. (Eph.3:6)

(8) By his death the members of his church are reconciled to God.

Reconciliation was one of the many blessings of the New Covenant Christ made with his church. (Heb.2:17)

(9) Gentiles in this church are fellowheirs with the Jews and partake of their promise and promises by faith alone without works.

That is why Christ said that many will come from the east and west (gentiles) and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. (Matt.8:11)

(10) Christ's church is justified by faith without works just like the publican in

Luke 18.

Justification by faith was another Old Testament promise (Hab.2:4) preached by both Christ and Paul. (Rom.1:17)

(11) Christ's church is forgiven by the grace of God like the adulteress in John 8 and the prostitute in Luke 7.

(12) Christ's church is born again according to John 3.

(13) Christ's church has an inheritance in the Kingdom of God. The reason it is born again is because it must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3)

(14) Its members are in Christ, Christ is in them and they are one with Christ according to John 14, 17.

The Spirit of Christ links them together with Christ and with one another. That is why Christ's church is called his body. His church was saved by the death and shed blood of the physical body of Christ on the cross and it became his body mystical with the coming of his Spirit in Acts 2.

(15) Christ's church observes the Lord's Supper.

It observes the Lord's Supper because it partakes of all the blessings and benefits of the New Covenant.

(16) It is forgiven of all sins including those the law could not forgive. The blood that Christ shed for his church forgave the sins the law could not forgive.

(17) Christ's church is indwelt with the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of Promise. That is why Jesus said he would never leave or forsake his church.

(18) Christ's church enjoys the peace that Christ promised it.

(19) It is under the grace that came by Jesus Christ and not the Law that came by Moses.

(20) His Church worships him as God manifest in the flesh.

(21) His church is saved from the hell he preached and warned men of throughout his ministry.

(22) His church is saved by his miraculous birth and his sacrificial death.

(23) His church overcomes temptation and sin as he did.

(24) His church blesses their enemies as Christ blessed his.

(25) His church lays up its treasure in heaven and not on earth

(26) The gentiles in his church are saved by the fall of the unbelieving Jews and are one body with the elect remnant of Jews

(27) His church expects to be persecuted and to suffer tribulation before Christ comes again.

(28) His church will be rewarded for suffering.

(29) His church follows his example as the apostles followed him.

(30) The hope of Christ's church is the coming of Christ with his angels and saints to resurrect the dead and catch up those still alive.

It's the one and only hope of all believers from all ages.

From these facts it is obvious the church Christ said he would build is identical to the church in Paul's epistles called the body of Christ. Paul simply expanded upon these blessings and benefits in his epistles.

When Christ's Church Began and why it's called His Body

In Colossians 1:18 Paul wrote: **And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

Christians have debated for years as to when the church, the body of Christ began. Here is a verse that clearly says Christ is the beginning of something. Beginning of what? In the context in which it appears, the body of Christ, the church. He is the beginning of the body because he is the head of the body. It only stands to reason that if he is the head of the body he must be the beginning. The body of Christ did not start with Peter or Paul; it began with the head who is Christ. But when? Paul tells us when in Ephesians 1:19-23. In his prayer for the Ephesians he prayed God would open their understanding to see:

What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

These verses tell us plainly God made Christ the head over all things to the church. But when? It says when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places. If we can locate the time he sat down at God's right hand in heaven, we can locate the time God made him the head of the church. In Acts 1:9 Jesus ascended up into heaven and in Acts 2:33 Peter said:

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

Here is the sequence: In Acts 1:9 Jesus ascended up into heaven and in Acts 2:33 Peter said he was then seated at the right hand of God in heaven. And Paul said God made him head over all things to the church when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places. The verses speak for themselves. The church of God became the body of Christ in Acts 1 when Christ ascended up into heaven to sit at God's right hand, not Acts 28 or 9 or 13 either.

Once the body of Christ began, it grew and expanded from a small group of Jews in Jerusalem to multitudes of Jews and gentiles in all the world.

*Ten days after Christ ascended up to heaven to become the head of the church, 3000 believers were added to the church in Acts 2.

*In Acts 4, 5000 men were added to his church.

*In Acts 5, multitudes of men and women were added.

*In Acts 6, the number of the disciples multiplied greatly and a great company of priests were added to the church.

*In Acts 8, many believers in Samaria were added to the church.

*In Acts 9, the chief of sinners, Paul, was added to the church.

*In Acts 10, uncircumcised gentiles were added (Cornelius) to the church for the first time.

*In Acts 11, many believers were added to the church in Antioch where they were first called Christians.

*In Acts 13-14, the door of faith was opened to the gentiles and many were added to the church in Cyprus, Antioch of Pisidia, the region of Galatia, and Syria.

*In Acts 16, believers were added to the church in Philippi. (Europe)

*In Acts 17, a great multitude of believers were added to the church in Thessalonica and Berea and a few in Athens.

*In Acts 18, a multitude was added to the church in Corinth.

*In Acts 19, many were added to the church in Ephesus.

*Many believers were also added to his church throughout many cities in Asia such as: Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Laodicea, Sardis, and Philadelphia. (Rev.2-3)

The book of Acts is a record of how the church Christ built began and how it grew from a small group of Jews in Jerusalem to multitudes of Jews and gentiles throughout the world. Contrary to what many dispensationalists believe, the apostles were not sent to "offer Israel the kingdom". There is not one verse of scripture in the book of Acts that makes such a claim. They were sent to build the church which Christ said he would build and they did a tremendous job. They were a great success. The book of Acts is a record of success not failure as some imply. Christ's church was built and millions were added to it!

The church Christ built is called his body for a good reason. It's called Christ's body because Christ lives in the believer, and the believer is in Christ, thus making them one body. Anyone and everyone who is in Christ, in whom the Spirit of Christ lives, are in the body of Christ. It is impossible for Christ to be in a believer and for that believer to be in Christ, without him being in the body of Christ. Part of the mystery is that gentiles like us are made members of the same body with the Jews who were in it before us having trusted in Christ before us.

Did everyone understand all these things about Christ's church in the Four Gospels? It's obvious they didn't. But, our faith is not based upon what men did not know, but what Christ actually said about his church. Just because men did not understand all these things when they heard them the first time, does not mean they are not true. Jesus told his apostles many things they did not understand until after he died. (He told them he was going to die and be resurrected many times during the Four Gospels, (Luke 18:34) but they did not understand what he was saying until after his resurrection. (Luke 24:44-47.)

We have the advantage of looking back and we can see all these things clearly. We have this advantage because in his epistles Paul explains and develops the doctrines Christ preached in the Four Gospels more fully. This is especially true of the cross of Christ. A few years ago I owned an instant Polaroid camera. When the picture first came out of the camera it was blurred and it was hard to see all the fine details. But after a few minutes passed the picture became clear and easy to see. What Christ said in his earthly ministry was not understood by all who heard him at the first. But after he went back to heaven and sent the Spirit into the hearts of the apostles they began to see and understand what he said. Today we can see the picture very clear in their epistles. The doctrines of Christ are made more visible and clearer in the epistles of the apostles especially Paul's.

I believe Paul understood Christ's doctrines and preaching better than anyone else and when Paul wrote of the "wholesome words of Christ" in 1 Timothy 6:3 there is no doubt he was referring to the words Christ taught and preached in his earthly ministry. He understood his words and developed them fuller than any other New Testament writer.

When he said he followed Christ he did indeed follow what Christ preached and practiced in his earthly ministry. Think about this for a moment. In his epistles Paul quotes the Old Testament between 150 – 200 times. He uses the expression "as it is written" 33 times referring to the Old Testament. I have counted at least 60 church doctrines that Paul based upon the Old Testament scriptures. If this is true why do people have such a hard problem believing that Paul preached what Christ preached in the Four Gospels? If he followed the preaching, teaching and writing of the Prophets then surely he followed the preaching and teaching of Christ!

One other comment about Christ and Paul. God did not start a new church with Paul. There is not a verse of scripture anywhere in the Bible that says such a thing. Christ built one church and that church is his body and Paul and the other apostles built upon the foundation laid by Christ.

The Hard Verses

I have included this section because I know what some dispensationalists will say. They will point to verses like Matthew 19:17 where Jesus told the rich young ruler: ***If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*** Or they will point to verses like Matthew 5:23-24 where the Lord told a man: ***Therefore if thou bring thy gift (sacrifice) to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave***

there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

How can verses like these be reconciled with Matthew 20:28 and John 3:13-18? This presents a real problem in some people's mind. How do we explain these verses? There is one thing we should not do. We should not explain them away or spiritualize them. The Lord meant what he said and said what he meant to these men.

The answer to this problem is recognizing the fact that the Law was not abolished until Christ died according to Ephesians 2:14-16. Until the law was abolished works were required, including animal sacrifices, along with believing to be saved. Prior to the death of Christ men were justified and made righteous by keeping the law and their sins were forgiven by offering animal sacrifices for their sins. The Bible is very clear about this issue.

Consider these facts about the Law

(a) There was righteousness under the law.

Deuteronomy 6:25 says: ***And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.***

Paul did not disagree with this for he wrote in Romans 10:5: ***For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.***

(b) There was justification under the Law.

In Romans 2:13 Paul said: ***For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.***

© There was forgiveness of sins under the Law.

In Leviticus 4 there is a list of different sins committed by different people and in each case their sins were atoned for and forgiven when the priest offered an animal sacrifice for them. For example when the people sinned through ignorance Leviticus 4:20 says: ***And he (the priest) shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.***

The same thing is said of the sins of rulers (Lev.4:26), sins of the common people (Lev.4:31), and sins of uncleanness (Lev.5:10).

These verses mean what they say and say what they mean. It clearly says their sins were atoned for and forgiven by the death and shed blood of the animal sacrifice. The animal died for the sinner's sins. Because the animal died the sinner was allowed to live. His sins were forgiven and not held against him because they were charged to the animal. The sinner's sins were transferred to the animal that died for them and the innocence of the animal was transferred to the sinner who offered it. That is why they offered animals without spot or blemish.

What Paul tells us in Romans 10 is that Christ brought an end to the righteousness, forgiveness and the justification of the law. In Romans 10:4 he said; ***Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.*** Paul never denies that there was righteousness under the law. He simply says Christ brought an end to it. Keeping the law is no longer the

way sinners are made righteous. They were, but not any more. Christ changed it by his death. In Ephesians 2:14-16 Christ abolished the Law by his death. In Colossians 2:14 the Law was nailed to the cross of Christ. In Hebrews 10:9-14 the Law was taken out of the way by the cross.

*Under the law a person had to work continually to be righteous and justified, but now by one act of faith in Christ we are made righteous and justified.

*Under the law a person had to offer sacrifices continually to be forgiven. But, by Christ's one sacrifice we are forgiven.

*Under the law it was the works of the sinner, but by the grace that came by Jesus Christ it's the works of Christ.

*Christ brought an end to the whole Law system of righteousness, justification and forgiveness. He changed it by his death on the cross.

This explains why the Lord told the man in Matthew 5 to offer his gift to the priest. Until Christ offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice for sins he told people to continue to offer animal sacrifices for sin, for until he died there was no other way they could be forgiven of sin.

This explains why he told the young ruler in Matthew 19 to keep the Law to enter into eternal life. Until Christ died on the cross a man had to continue to keep the law including sacrifices to receive life. What else could the Lord tell this man? He was saved the same as all men were saved PRIOR to the cross.

But, the cross changed this. His death on the cross abolished the Law and by abolishing the Law he took the works out of salvation and made faith the only requirement to be saved, justified, forgiven and made righteous.

But where do we first read about his sacrificial death and his promise to abolish the Law and save men by faith? In the Four Gospels. The sacrificial death of Christ that took place during the earthly ministry of Christ is what brought an end to salvation, justification and righteousness by the works of the Law. It ushered in the grace of John 1:17 by abolishing the Law that came by Moses.

Throughout his earthly ministry Christ foretold of his coming death. He told the apostles over and over again that they would witness his death and resurrection. And it was in view of his coming death and resurrection that he made the promises found in John 3, John 5, John 10 and many others. Paul elaborates on these promises more fully in his epistles.

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

How the life and death of Christ is our example to follow under grace

1 Peter 2:21 says that Christ; ***left us an example, that ye should follow his steps.***

Jesus Christ is not only our Lord and Savior, but he is our ***example***. He not only died for us, but left us an example as to how to live. Can you think of a better example to follow than Christ? He is not only God's Son, but he is the Ideal Man. By Christ's example we learn how to face every issue in our life under grace.

There are those (hyper dispensationalists) who say we can't follow the earthly life of Christ as an example today. But that is wrong. Paul and all of the apostles not only preached salvation through Christ, but they looked to him as their example to follow in conduct, behavior, morals, and practical living. Paul said ***Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*** Paul followed the example that Christ gave him in his life and death. By examining the life of Paul you will see that his life was modeled after the life of Christ. He not only received his doctrine from Christ, he received his pattern of life from Christ. Paul had many of the same attitudes, traits, and qualities in his life as Christ. And so should we.

To say we can't follow Christ's example while he was on earth is not only wrong, but it is unscriptural. Paul and all of the apostles not only preached salvation through Christ, but they hold him up *in their epistles* as the example for the church to follow in conduct, love, behavior, morals, practical living, humility, faithfulness and many other issues.

Christ Is Our Example Of Humility

Philippians 2:5-8 says; ***Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.***

These verses describe the earthly mind set of Christ and Paul said; *let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* The mind of Christ is revealed in the life and death of Christ. What was the mind and life of Christ like? How did he act and behave? What kind of a person was he? From reading these verses I see that Christ;

Made himself of no reputation

That tells me;

He was not a proud, pompous person.

He was not a loud person.

He did not set out to make a name for himself.

He did not brag about his accomplishments.

He did not try to attract attention to himself.

He did not come to make a reputation for himself. He was low key and kept out of the lime light.

He was nothing like the so called religious leaders of today.

He was a servant

That tells me;

He did not demand men to treat him better than others.

He asked for no favors or special treatment.

He was a very modest man.

He did not live as nobility, but lived and acted as a servant.

He never got his way, nor asked for it.

He always took second place to his Father.

He put his Father's will ahead of his, for he was a servant.

He was made in the likeness of men

Even though he was equal to God in every way, he made few claims to deity. He called himself the Son of Man more times than the Son of God. He did not try to appear as someone special or different from ordinary men. He suffered all the pain, hardships and temptations of ordinary men.

He humbled himself

He was a very meek, submissive and lowly person.

He was not haughty, arrogant, or demanding.

He was a quite person.

He did not have a charismatic personality. (See Isa.53:2-3)

He put the needs of other people ahead of his own.

He made others rich by becoming poor.

He preached the truth even when it cost him friends and even his own life.

He was obedient

His life was spent doing what somebody else told him to do.

He was not a leader who gave orders, but a follower who obeyed orders.

He never got his way, for his will was to do His Father's will.

He obeyed his Father's word even though it cost him his life.

Jesus Christ is the supreme example of humility in the Bible. This world has never seen anyone as humble as Christ. If you want to know what a humble person is like look at him. If you want to be humble yourself, follow his example.

Christ Is Our Example Of Love

Ephesians 5:2 says; ***And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.***

When it comes to love under grace we are told to walk in love as Christ also hath loved us. The love that Christ demonstrated in his life and death nearly 2000 years ago is the example and pattern of what our love should be like today.

What do we know about the love of Christ?

He loves bad people.

His love is always the same.

He loves with a pure motive.

Those he loves do not deserve nor earn it.

He is dedicated to those he loves.

He never forsakes those he loves.

He cherishes those he loves.

He endured hardships for those he loves.

He sacrificed his life for those he loves.

He forgives those he loves.

He does not hold grudges against those he loves.

He is tender hearted with those he loves.

He blesses those he loves.

Those he loves, he loves forever.

He is long-suffering and merciful with those he loves.

If every Christian followed Christ's example of love there would be no more divorces in Christian marriages; no more church splits over personalities; no fighting in the home; no discord among the brethren; more lost souls would be saved; and the morals and behavior of Christians would radically change for the better. If we loved the Lord as much as he loves us, we would never offend him again by canal behavior.

Christ Is Our Example Of Bearing Burdens

Romans 15:1-3 says; ***We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.***

When it comes to bearing the burdens, problems and infirmities of other people under grace, Christ again is our example. From these verses we see;

Christ was not a burden to men, instead he carried their burdens.

Christ did not trouble men with his burdens, instead he troubled himself with theirs.

Christ did not come to be ministered unto, he came to minister unto others.

Christ never put his needs ahead of others, he put the needs of others ahead of his.

Christ did not please himself by getting his way, he pleased others by giving them their way.

Christ did not get rich at other men's expense, he made others rich at his own expense.

He did not cause his brothers to stumble and fall by exercising his liberties, he gave up his liberties to win them.

When it came to bearing burdens Christ put the needs of others ahead of his own, and so should we. In Philp.2:4 Paul said; ***Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*** We live in a very selfish society. We live in a day when we are told to look out for number one. We make self our number one priority. Christ was not like that. He made others number one. Christ did not live for himself, he lived for others. His priority was the needs of others, not his own. He was totally unselfish. He gave his time and attention to others.

Is that the way we live? Do we really bear the burdens of others? Do we put the needs of others ahead of our own? How much inconvenience are we willing to suffer for the benefit of others?

Christ Is Our Example Of Faithfulness

Hebrews 12:1-3 says; ***Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.***

We have a long, hard race set before us and we are commanded to lay aside any weight or sin in our life that would beset us from running and finishing our race. This race began the day we were saved and will end with the second coming of Christ. This race is the life we live between our conversion and Christ's coming. At the end of the race God will judge how we ran the race. God will exam how we used our lives, bodies,

time, money, mind and the talents that he gave us, to serve and honor him in this present evil world. The world, flesh and the Devil will do every thing in their power to knock you out of this race. They will try to wreck your life, ruin your testimony, destroy your zeal, and quench your Spirit to get you out of this race. Their hope is that when the race is over, you will be a total wreck on the side lines, out of service and out of fellowship with the Lord. They don't want you to finish the race with honors.

To show us how to finish the race with joy and honors, God gave us Christ as an example to follow. He ran the same race we now run and finished with honors. If you want to know how to run this race successfully follow Christ around the track. Richard Petty said he learned how to race at Daytona by following Fireball Roberts around the track. We learn how to run our race by following Christ. The main thing I want to emphasize is that Christ did not give up in spite of overwhelming odds. His race was a very hard race with many persecutions and troubles, but he finished the race with honors.

How did he run the race?

He did not allow personal problems to beset him and get him down.

He did not allow disappointments to demoralize him and knock him out of the race.

He did not allow the denial of his disciples and the desertion of all of his followers to quench his zeal.

He didn't let the Devil knock him out of the race even though he hounded him throughout his public ministry.

He did not allow his burdens to beset him and make him quit.

When others quit he kept on running.

When others became weary and fainted he stayed in the race.

You say; I've tried to run this race but I have had so many wrecks and break downs I don't think I can make it any more. I feel like God is finished with me and my life don't count anymore. Dear friend, every good driver has his share of wrecks. Richard Petty said he could start a junk yard with all the cars he wrecked, but he didn't quit. He put the wrecks back together and got back in the race. He still holds the record for the most races won in Nascar. Did you know that at the same time that Babe Ruth was the home run king, he was also the strikeout king? Did you ever strike out? Ruth didn't let his strike outs stop him from playing baseball. If you have grown weary in your race take another look at Jesus. He got weary and tired like you, plus he suffered at the hands of lost people and was deserted by his own disciples, but he stayed in the race till the end. He kept his eyes on the prize. Paul said; ***For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.***

Christ Is Our Example Of Suffering

1 Peter 2:20-21 says; ***For what glory is it when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently? But if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.***

In these verses God shows us how to deal with our enemies when they threaten and

persecute us. The example he gives us to follow is Christ's. What do we learn from the sufferings of Christ? When they persecuted him how did he respond? How did he overcome his enemies? We learn from Christ's example that;
Good men suffer.

Good men suffer for doing good works.

Good works will not go unnoticed or unpunished by the Devil.

The Devils main target is the person who is closest to God.

Suffering is a part of the Christian's life, but revenge is not.

In Christ's life he didn't ask for persecution, but he never detoured around it.

Christ counted it joy and a honor to suffer for his Father's sake.

When men cursed Christ, he never cursed them back.

When they threatened Him, he did not return their threats.

When men conspired against him, he did not conspire to get even with them.

Christ committed his enemies into the Lords hands. This is the way that Christ responded to persecution and his enemies. This is the example he left us to follow today. When we got saved we inherited the enemies of Christ. His enemies became ours, and by his example we learn how to overcome them.

Christ Is Our Example In Giving

Acts 20:35 says; ***I (Paul) have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.***

These are the words that Christ spoke while on earth. He spoke these words while on earth and one of the apostles told Paul what the Lord said and Paul repeats it as an example for us. When it comes to giving what Christ said on earth is the example we should follow today. He said: ***it is more blessed to give than to receive.*** Today we are told that it is more blessed to receive than to give, but Jesus said it is the other way around. The blessing is in giving. Why? Because when you give you bring joy and blessing to those in need, plus you lay up treasure in heaven for yourself according to Matt.6:19-21.

Most Christians have their priorities turned around. If they are not on the receiving end of giving they feel left out and disappointed. But Jesus said the blessing and the joy is in giving, not receiving. When you give, you bring blessing and joy to others, plus you reap an added benefit of laying up treasure in heaven for yourself where thieves, the IRS, inflation, and hurricanes can't blow them away. They will be waiting for you when you get there. That is why Christ said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

These are just a few of the many places in the scriptures where the apostles used what Christ said and did in his earthly ministry as an example for us to follow today. Remember, he was the ideal man and the ultimate model of humility, love, faithfulness, mercy, compassion, and longsuffering. You cannot find a better example to follow than Jesus Christ.

A Damnable Doctrine

I believe one of the most damnable doctrines that has crept out of hell is the teaching that we do not know, follow or obey Christ in his earthly ministry. This lie is based upon a perversion of 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 which says:

(14) For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

(15) And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

(16) Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

(17) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

Christians and preachers of every persuasion have a tendency of lifting verses out of their context to make them say what they do not mean. For example, some lift verse 16 out of its context and say it means that we cannot follow Christ in his earthly ministry after the flesh today. They say the flesh in verse 16 is Christ's flesh and refers to his earthly ministry as recorded in Matthew through John. Even though Paul said that he was a follower of Christ in 1 Cor.11:1, many extreme dispensationalists have such phobia about Christ's earthly ministry that they go as far as to say it is totally wrong to follow what Christ said and did while on earth. They assume that Paul completely ignored everything that Christ said and did in his earthly ministry. I have heard some even say that they do not follow Christ, they follow Paul! **But I would ask the reader; do you see any reference to Christ's earthly ministry in these verses?** Read the verses again. Frankly, I do not. Whose flesh is Paul writing about in these verses? In the context in which it appears it is our flesh not Christ's.

In verse 14 Paul says that when Christ died we all died with him. His death was counted as our death. In verse 15 he said we no longer live unto ourselves, because we died with Christ. This agrees with what he wrote throughout his epistles. In Romans 6:6 he wrote; **Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.**

The old man, which is called the flesh throughout Paul's epistles (Gal.5:16-21) is crucified with Christ which means he is dead. And being dead we are free from sin. We are free from the power of the flesh the old nature. In Colossians 2:11 he wrote; **In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.**

In spiritual circumcision the flesh, the old man, is cut off. We are free from him and do not have to follow him any longer.

So in the context of 2 Corinthians 5 the flesh Paul wrote about is not Christ's flesh, it's *our flesh*. We are no longer in the flesh, for the flesh the old man was cut off and crucified with Christ. That is why Paul said in Romans 8:9; **But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.** The flesh, the old man's history ended at the cross and now we are new creatures in Christ according to verse 17.

Notice the word *henceforth* in verse 16. Now that we have died with Christ henceforth know we no man, including Christ after the flesh. We know all men in a new way, after the Spirit. We see all men in a way we never saw them before. When we were lost and still in the flesh, we knew all men, including Christ after the flesh and our knowledge was very limited for the flesh has no spiritual discernment. In 1 Corinthians 2:14 Paul

wrote; ***But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...neither can he know them.*** But now that we are new creatures in Christ we see and know all things and all men and especially Christ in a new and living way. The eyes of our understanding have been enlightened and now we can see what we could not see before.

The point is, Paul is not saying that we don't know Christ or follow Christ in his earthly ministry. **That is totally foreign to the context!** In the context the flesh is our flesh and it was crucified with Christ and henceforth we see and know Christ as well as all men in a new way, in the Spirit.

When we were crucified with Christ everything about us became new. In these verses our ***motivation for living became new.*** We are now constrained by the love of Christ to dedicate our lives totally to the Lord.

The life we live became new. Henceforth we no longer live for ourselves, but for Christ who died for us and rose again.

Our knowledge and understanding of all men became new. We no longer know or see men after the flesh. Henceforth, we know and see all men and especially Christ in a new way, after the Spirit. We see and know things differently today being new creatures in Christ. We see and know Christ in a new way and what we see is the most lovely, wonderful person in all the universe who is worthy to follow.

In the flesh I did not see Christ as I see him today. When I was in the flesh Christ was not a wonderful person to me. He was a menace. In the flesh I did not see men as I see them today. In the flesh I thought that men were basically good when in fact there is none that doeth good no not one.

Dear reader, always interpret a text by the context in which it appears. Notice what is written before and after it. When you do you will not be led astray by the error of the wicked.