

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

September 2004

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:2) I pray that you are all doing well. This month is a very busy one for me. I will be speaking at several meetings across the country, as listed on page 8. Please pray for the success of these meetings. If you have not yet made plans to attend, please do so now. I am looking forward to seeing each of you there.

I would like to remind you about our new book entitled *God's Love on Trial*. If you have not yet read this book, I encourage you to get a copy and read it, and share it with your friends. If you have Internet access, you can download a pdf version of it to print in its original format (it is available in A4 and letter sizes), or you can read it in html at http://www.presenttruth.info/books/God_on_Trial/Gods_Love_on_Trial.htm. (Links for the pdf versions are on the bottom of the page.)

The Truth of the Gospel

by David Clayton

The gospel is the central teaching of Christianity. In fact, we may rightly say that there is no truth contained in the Bible which does not find its center in the gospel. The word “gospel” signifies “good news,” and this focus on good news is what separates Christianity from every other religion. While other religions focus on how we can find a path to God, Christianity proclaims that God has made a path to us and dealt with all the factors which separated us from Him.

Fundamentals of the Gospel

It is through His Son, Jesus Christ, that God has brought mankind back to Himself. By the incarnation, life, death and present ministry of Christ, God has removed all the barriers which stood in the way of humanity being fully reconciled to Himself. The work of Christ on our behalf may be briefly summarized in the following four points:

- ✳ God's love for us was revealed in the gift of Christ. (John 3:16)
- ✳ Christ revealed God by the life which He lived. (John 1:18; 1 John 5:20)
- ✳ Christ passed through our experiences so that He could represent us. (Hebrews 2:16, 17)
- ✳ Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins. (Romans 6:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 2:14)

Let us take note of each of these points. It is most important that we recognize the significance of what Christ

has done. This is the gospel. Without these four points the whole of our faith is a vain, meaningless exercise. It is a failure to recognize these points, to believe them and to come to grips with them which has led to the impotent, frustrating sham which today passes for Christianity in much of Christendom.

Satan's Primary Objective

In order for Satan to prevent the overthrow of his kingdom and keep his subjects (humanity) in bondage, his first objective had to be to prevent Christ from fulfilling His mission. His most persistent and earnest efforts were put forth to prevent Jesus from fulfilling the four above-mentioned tasks. If he had been able to do this, mankind could never have been reconciled to God and so, Satan concentrated all his efforts on stopping the work of Christ. This he attempted to do for the entire duration of Jesus' life, from the manger to the grave.

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First, he tried to destroy Him when he was born, then he hounded Him for every moment of His life, attempting to provoke Him to such an extent that He would display some characteristic which was not consistent with God's nature of love; something which would have revealed that there are flaws in the character of God and that He is a person who cannot be trusted to do what is right when He is put under pressure. Later, as Jesus approached the moment of His death, Satan did everything possible through the enemies of Christ and even through His disciples, to turn Him away from His purpose. Even while He hung dying on the cross Satan desperately attempted to move Him from His purpose with the taunts of the those who watched.

"He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." (Matthew 27:42, 43)

Satan's Next Best Move

All these efforts of the enemy were defeated by the Son of God. Jesus demonstrated conclusively that the essence of God's nature is self-sacrificing love and that all the pain and suffering in the universe cannot turn God away from the way of love and mercy. Yet, in spite of this, Satan's battle was not finished. He did not lay down arms and surrender when Jesus finished His work on earth. Though Christ was out of his reach, he could still continue the fight by assaulting the subjects of Christ here on earth. We are familiar with the record of his atrocities against the people of God. Millions have been cruelly tortured and murdered in the most dreadful ways by men who were the agents of Satan in seeking to turn the people of God away from His service.

Yet, Satan's success by using persecution was only limited. He has worked in another, less direct and far more cunning way, and has achieved far greater success in destroying the faith of the people of God.

Though Jesus has faithfully and perfectly carried out His work on man's behalf, if Satan can prevent people from believing and, therefore, benefitting from these key truths he will, to all intents and purposes, make the work of Christ of none effect! If he could present an idea which would lead to the conclusion, or suggest that Jesus' work was not genuinely what it appeared to be, or that it might have been a sham, if he could somehow get Christians (of all people!) to believe in something which would undermine their faith in the reality of Jesus' great achievements on their behalf, then he would nullify the effectiveness of Christ's work.

Christ has done all this for man, but if man will not believe and accept what has been done, the work of Christ will avail nothing! It is here that Satan implemented his next best plan and has had marvelous success in carrying it out.

Satan could not prevent Christians from *professing* the four great truths contained in the gospel. The Bible statements are too plain for any professing Christian to openly deny these truths. However, it does not really matter what we profess if in our hearts we really believe something else. Our behavior is determined by what we really believe rather than by what we profess to believe. Therefore, because of believing falsehood in their hearts, while professing the truth, Christians would be unable to benefit from what Christ did, even though the work had been accomplished.

Christ is the center of the gospel. He is the heart of all that the Bible stands for. He is the only hope of mankind. Whatever opposes Him and obscures His work is the most dangerous enemy of God and humanity. Nothing else can be as destructive. The Bible has coined a word to describe such an enemy—a word which represents that which is most to be feared of all opponents of the gospel. This fearsome word is *antichrist*. In it is embodied all that is most harmful to the cause of God.

The Papacy has been identified for many centuries as the great antichrist of Bible prophecy. Even before the time of the protestant reformation, holy men saw in this paganized mockery of Christianity, the embodiment of satanic principles which made it, with the Pope as its key representative, the very essence of antichrist. However, as people have focused on the antichrist over the centuries, their perspective has been a little warped and to a great extent they have missed a most important point. Most of those who have identified the Papacy as the antichrist have focused on the persecutions carried out by this power against Christians along with the changing of the law of God and the massive introduction of pagan practices into the worship of Roman Catholicism.

"Antichrist" in the Bible

It is most interesting to note, however, that the word "antichrist," is never used in the Bible in connection with any of these well-known works of the Papacy which most Christians focus on. The word "antichrist" is mentioned only four times in the Bible and in every place it refers to a false teaching concerning Christ.

The word "antichrist" is first mentioned in 1 John 2:18. Here it says,

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many

antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” (1 John 2:18)

From this verse we can learn a little of the understanding which the early Christians had concerning the antichrist. First of all, they believed in a great antichrist or antichristian power which would arise sometime in the future during the last days. John stated that there were already (in his days) many antichrists and, to him, this was an evidence that they were living in the “last time,” or the last days.

It is evident that John believed in a single great antichrist power. He said, “Ye have heard that antichrist (or *the* antichrist) shall come.” This was the understanding of John and those early Christians. Yet already some people had arrived on the scene to whom John referred as “antichrists.” If they were not *the* antichrist, why does he refer to them as “antichrists?” Is not the main idea of antichrist primarily that of an eschatological figure (appearing at the end of time) that is a destroyer of Christians by persecution?

Evidently, there is another, more fundamental identifying characteristic of the antichrist. So fundamental is this identifying quality that even when a person does not live at the end (as in John’s time) and is not actively persecuting God’s people, yet he may still bear the name and character of antichrist if he possesses this particular quality. What is this key identifying characteristic of antichrist?

Marks of an Antichrist?

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22)

The first teaching of this verse is an obvious one. It hardly seems necessary to mention it, and yet, in light of the tremendous deception which has overwhelmed Christendom, we point out that John says that antichrist is a liar. It is fundamental to the spirit and principles of antichrist that he is opposed to the truth. This principle is the foundation of his kingdom and, therefore, in his teachings, we look for lies at every turn. We should be careful about believing what he says.

First Lie: What is his first lie? He denies that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed one). Such a teaching would be understandable if John were referring to the heathen who deny this. It would also be simple to comprehend if he were speaking of the Jews who also deny this. But he is speaking of neither a Jew nor a heathen teacher. The term and the concept of antichrist suggest one who works from within. (2 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 John 2:19) He is a professed Christian who sits in the Christian church. This is why it is so amazing to see the things which he denies. His teachings deny that Jesus is the Messiah!

Second Lie: His second lie is that he denies the Father and the Son. How does he do this? Does he deny the reality of their existence or the Father/Son relationship which exists between them.

It is highly improbable that this is suggesting that he denies the existence of the Father and the Son. Nobody professing to be a Christian could deny such a thing. It is far more likely that what John is saying is that the antichrist denies the fatherhood of God in relation to the Son, Jesus Christ.

Third Lie: “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (1 John 4:2, 3)

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” (2 John 1:7)

The third lie of antichrist mentioned, is the denial that Jesus Christ came *in the flesh*. What is implied by this term “in the flesh?” Some say that when Jesus came to this earth He took the unfallen, sinless nature of Adam before he committed sin. Others insist that He took the fallen sinful nature of man which developed after Adam transgressed. They point to these verses here in John as a warning against the belief that Jesus took the sinless nature of Adam before he fell. They claim that the term, “in the flesh,” signifies that he took *sinful flesh, or fallen flesh*, meaning that He took the nature of man, suffering as it was from four thousand years of degeneracy. They point to other verses in the Bible where the term, “the flesh,” is used to suggest a person in a sinful state or with a sinful mind. (See for example, Romans 7:5, 18.)

However, this term, “in the flesh,” has another meaning in the Bible, and when we carefully examine these statements of John and examine the Papal antichrist in light of these statements, it is evident that we are to apply the other meaning to this phrase.

“In the Flesh”

What is the other meaning of the phrase? In this other usage, it simply means that He was actual flesh and blood. In other words, He was not a spirit, or a supernatural being. The term, “in the flesh,” is used with this meaning in the following verses:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death *in the flesh*, but quickened by the Spirit.” (1 Peter 3:18)

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us *in the flesh*, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.” (1 Peter 4:1)

“And the Word *was made flesh*, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

What John is telling us is that Jesus was an actual human being. The term “in the flesh,” signifies literal humanity. To fully appreciate the truthfulness of what I am saying we need to understand some of the misconceptions concerning the Christ, which people held during the time of the apostles. Some of the statements made by the Jews from time to time give us clues as to some of the ideas they had concerning the Messiah. It was the failure of Jesus to meet all these expectations which puzzled His disciples and led many of the Jews, and later apostate Christians (1 John 2:19), to deny that He was the Christ.

Misconceptions About Christ

Let us examine the three passages below as we look at these false expectations of the Jews.

a) They believed that Christ would be immortal. He could not die.

“The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?” (John 12:34)

b) They believed that Christ would be omniscient, knowing all things.

“The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.” (John 4:25)

c) They believed that Christ would possess supernatural power.

“And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?” (John 7:31)

Two Errors: One Foundation

What is the common element which runs through all these expectations? What misconception is evident as we look at these verses? It is clear that the Jews expected the Messiah to be a supernatural superman. They expected someone who was far more than a human being; someone who, in fact, was a spirit or in other words, one who did not come “in the flesh.” The fact is, Jesus was too human for some of them. (1 John 2:22) In their estimation He was too human and these were the people who denied that He was the Christ.

On the other hand there were others who accepted that He was the Christ but who insisted that Jesus was not fully

a human being. (1 John 4:2) They taught that He did not come “in the flesh,” but that He was a supernatural being. Why did they teach this?

They believed He could not have done the things which He did unless He was a superhuman being. The mighty works of God through Him convinced them He was not a flesh being.

In one case, he was too human for them to accept Him, and in the other case, His works were too superhuman for them to believe that He was fully human.

What is the common error which we find here? What is the consistent element which runs through the belief of both these groups of people? Both were teaching different things. One said, Jesus was not the Christ. The other said, He was the Christ, but He was not human. Both errors were founded on the same basic false belief. What was it? It was that ***both groups believed in a supernatural Christ.*** Both groups believed in a Messiah who was more than human; somebody whose chief identity would be His power and supernatural abilities rather than His pure spotless character.

The underlying spirit of antichrist is the spirit which holds to the concept of a supernatural Messiah. Here we see the very essence of Roman Catholic philosophy, the idea that the main evidence of divinity is supernatural deeds (miracles) rather than purity of character. No matter how holy a person might have been, no matter how much good he might have done, he cannot be canonized or made a saint in the Roman Church unless several miracles have been associated with him, either during his lifetime or after death.

It is in Roman Catholicism that we find an emphasis on relics, little items which have some connection with some “holy person,” and which supposedly are invested with some miraculous power. It is in this system that we find apparitions of Mary or other dead people, which are eagerly accepted as an evidence of divine interaction with humanity.

This is the predominating spirit or principle of antichrist; an emphasis on power rather than character. Let us consider this point carefully and prayerfully because it is a most important point.

False Beliefs Which Follow

This concept of a Christ who was more than flesh and blood leads immediately to other false doctrines, which hit at the very foundation of Christ’s work. Some of these were:

- ✳ The belief that Christ could not really die.
- ✳ The belief that we need a mediator who is truly human (Christ is not; therefore we need Mary and the saints.)

- * The concept that it was Christ alone who suffered (since it was merely physical pain) rather than Himself and the Father.
- * The belief that all that Christ suffered was the physical pain of the beating and the crucifixion because, as God, He possessed all knowledge and had full awareness of what was really happening. Even His cry, “My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?” was simply a part of a well-orchestrated act, rather than the bewildered cry of a suffering Son. If Jesus was possessed of all these powers, then He could have known no real separation from His Father. He could have felt no real distress of mind at the prospect of God forsaking Him at Calvary. All that He could have suffered is the physical pain on account of His having assumed a human body.

It is interesting to note that the movie, “The Passion,” directed by the Catholic Mel Gibson, focuses on the physical suffering of Jesus. Those who have watched it have been moved by the brutal punishment which was inflicted upon Him as portrayed in the movie. But that is as far as it can go. For a Roman Catholic, who believes that Jesus was the second person of a three-part God, there could have been nothing else than that Jesus put on flesh so that He could, and did feel physical pain. The emotional and spiritual agony which He experienced, and which were infinitely more terrible, cannot be perceived by those who believe that He possessed all the knowledge and power of the almighty God while He was here in human form.

The Trinity Doctrine is Antichrist

The Bible declares the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, immortality and immutability as being characteristics which are exclusive to God. They are fundamental to His being and cannot be separated from Him. Those who declare that Jesus is a part of a Trinitarian God have no option but to believe that He was in possession of all these attributes while He was here on earth, and that all He did was to assume a human garb, while He remained, on the inside, the omnipotent God. This really denies the fact that Jesus came “in the flesh.” It is, in fact, the very essence of the spirit of antichrist. It is the belief that Christ was a supernatural superman.

Was Christ a Supernatural Being?

Some have suggested that Jesus was indeed possessed of all the powers of divinity while He was here on earth, but that He never once used these powers. It is necessary to say that He never used His powers, because of the reasons

mentioned above. Did Jesus have these powers or did He not have them? And if He had them, did He ever use them?

If Jesus had all these powers available, what is to prevent someone from concluding that Jesus must have secretly used His powers in order to overcome temptation? What is to prevent those who are beaten by sin to come to the conclusion that we can never overcome sin while we remain in the flesh? We are left with a gray area which Satan can and has used mightily to his advantage. Many Christians have come to the conclusion that victory over sin is impossible in this life and that the best we can do is to resist the more gross sins. When Jesus is pointed to as an example of a person who overcame all sin, they reply, “but you see, Jesus was God!”

Back in the 1960s a man by the name of John Griffin wrote a book entitled *Black Like Me*. This man was a white man, but he injected himself with a chemical which changed the color of his skin so that he passed for a black man. For several weeks (maybe months) he lived in the southern part of the United States, in his assumed identity, and experienced first hand the bigotry, hate, segregation and prejudice which were an accepted fact of life for a black person in those days. At the end of his experience he had a much better understanding of the problems which faced the black race in America. No doubt he also experienced the bitterness, the feelings of resentment, which seethed in them constantly as they were treated as second class citizens.

In spite of his close empathy with the black man’s experience, however, John Griffin was never quite exactly in the same position as a black man. He did not have the same heritage; he had not spent half of his life growing up in the ghettos, having his character molded by deprivation, desperate circumstances and the heritage of hundreds of years of enslavement and oppression. Always, behind the mask of his black face, there was the internal security of knowing that he really was one of the privileged class, that this assumed personality was only a facade which he could shed at any moment. Even the negative treatment which he received was not really aimed at him, for that was not really who he was. It was only aimed at the person whom he represented.

Was this how it was with Jesus? Was He possessed of a self-identity in a divine alter-ego, different from the human being who walked this earth as Jesus Christ? Was He simply God wearing a human body, or did He *become* as the Bible says, a human being? Let us not miss the point. It is possible that Jesus could have possessed divine powers in Himself and never used them, but the very fact that He possessed them would have ruined the purpose for which He came.

A Valid Demonstration

The life of Jesus was intended to demonstrate what divinity was really like. It was to show to men and the universe that God is perfectly good by nature, and that no afflictions or adverse circumstances will ever make Him move from His principles of pure and perfect love. The devil tried to make out that He was an untrustworthy Person who was only interested in exalting Himself and keeping down His creatures. (Genesis 3:5) Jesus came to prove that these accusations were false.

In order for Jesus to show what God was really like it was necessary that He should be placed in situations where He was truly tempted to do wrong. He had to face circumstances where His life was threatened, where He would seem to have no option but to do something which was not based on selfless love. He had to be assaulted by temptations which He would not know beforehand how to deal with. In other words, He had to be put in situations where His true nature would be clearly revealed; situations where it would be plain for all to see what His true character was.

This demonstration could not have been valid if Jesus had possessed, in Himself, divine powers. The very idea behind a demonstration is that it must be foolproof. It must be carried out in such a way that there is no room for trickery or deception. It must be plain to those who observe, that the conditions are such that what they are watching can only be a genuine demonstration with all the factors clearly on the table.

We may say that He did not use these powers, but how can we prove this? How could we demonstrate that Jesus really never used His divine powers to help Him to overcome sin? How can we establish the fact that He did not call upon divine reserves when He was tempted, when He was in trouble? How can we prove that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ was not simply a great act?

Once when the disciples were in a boat on the sea in danger of sinking, Jesus rebuked His disciples for having little faith. This rebuke was quite in order if Jesus was in the same position as the disciples. All He would have to depend upon was the good-will of His Father. His rebuke would be saying, "How could you doubt that your heavenly Father will take care of you?" However, if Jesus possessed divine power in Himself, which He could exercise at any moment, then His disciples might have been justified in saying, "It's okay for you to talk. You have the ability to escape at any moment, but we don't."

Consider a group of men in a plane which is going down. Most of them are panic stricken, but one of them is calm and unafraid. He rebukes the others for their fear and tells them to trust. Yet, how much weight can his words

have when it is discovered that he is the only one on board who has a parachute! His words would be so much more convincing if all of them are in the same dilemma, yet he encourages them to be unafraid and remains calmly serene.

The truth is that this concept that Jesus had the power in Himself, but never used it, is in keeping with the underlying principle of the antichrist's teaching. It represents Christ as one who was, in Himself, possessed of powers which were not available to the normal human being. It opens the door for Satan's accusation that Jesus' victory over sin was not that of a human being who was truly tempted as we are, but that of a God who carried out an elaborate sham.

The Evidence of Divinity

The Bible insists on the full humanity of Jesus in the incarnation. In fact, the apostle John declares that those who suggest that He was more than human are possessed of the spirit of antichrist. The word of God never ever points to the miracles which Jesus performed as the evidence of His divinity, they are only pointed out as the evidence that the Father was at work in Him. (See John 14:10, 11 and Acts 10:38.)


Yet there is no question that Jesus was not exactly like us in every respect. Though He was fully human, yet, paradoxically, He was still absolutely divine. There was something about Him which set Him apart from every other human being, as the sun is set apart from the light of a firefly. (Isaiah 9:2) What was this difference if He was not possessed of almighty power?

It was the quality of His life. The Bible points to Christ's life of infinite purity as the evidence that He was the Son of God.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

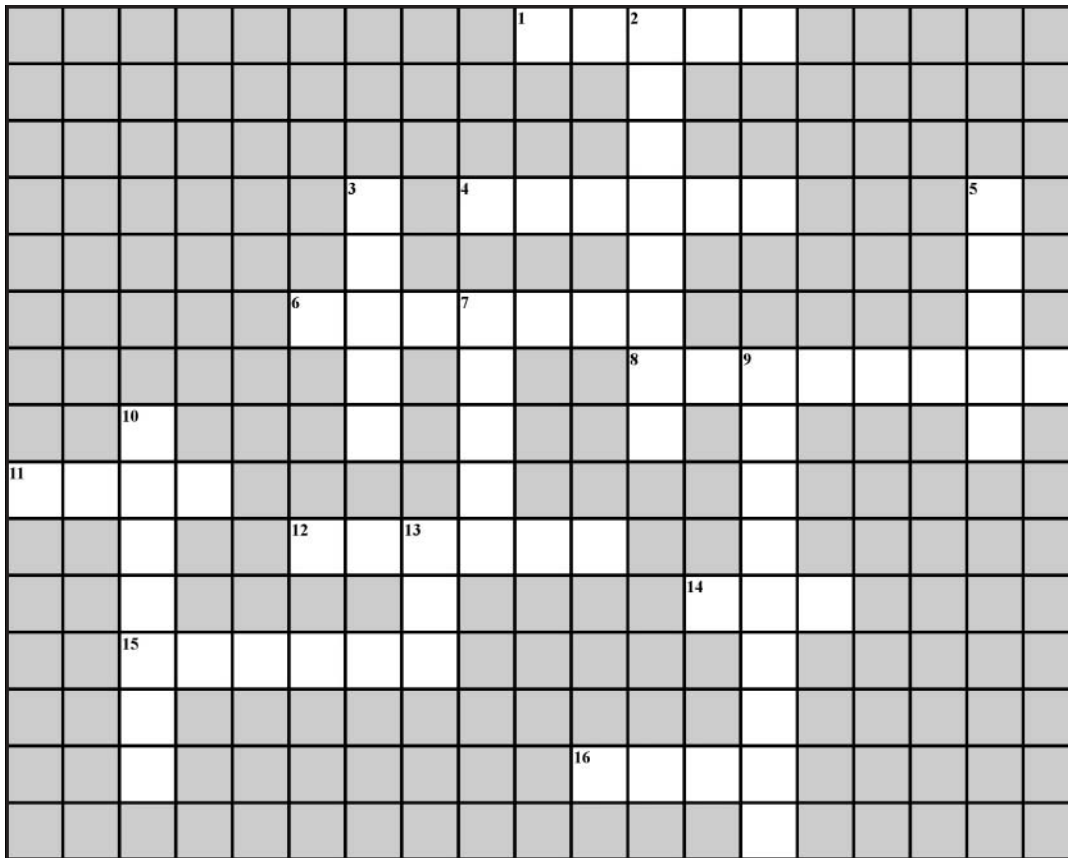
Jesus did not lay aside the divine character and nature. This He had to retain if He was to truly demonstrate what God is really like. But certainly He laid aside His divine power. 

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Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are printing a crossword puzzle that was contributed by one of our readers. We hope you enjoy it. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line.

Jesus Christ—Our Salvation



Answers are on page 12

Note: This crossword puzzle was contributed by one of our readers.

- A name meaning Saviour. Matthew 1:21—**7 Down**
- A name meaning anointed. Acts 16:31—**4 Across**
- "God ____ Jesus." Acts 10:38—**2 Down**
- "Behold my servant, whom I have ____." Matthew 12:18—**12 Across**
- "The ____ will make you free." John 8:32—**3 Down**
- "No man can say that Jesus is the ____, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Corinthians 12:3—**11 Across**
- "My Father is ____ than I." John 14:28—**10 Down**

Note: "John 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John 10:29)

- Joseph's position in Egypt as "lord" (Genesis 42:30) is defined by the Pharaoh: "Only in the ____ will I be greater than thou." Genesis 41:40—**15 Across**

Note: As Joseph was given authority to rule the kingdom while Pharaoh was still greater in the throne; even so Christ has been given authority and power to rule while His Father is still greater than He in the throne.

- God put all things under His Son, but "it is manifest that He is ____ which did put all things under Him." 1 Corinthians 15:27—**8 Across**
- After death is destroyed, Christ will continue to "be ____ unto him that put all things under him." 1 Corinthians 15:28—**6 Across**
- "To us there is but ____ God, the Father,... and ____ Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 8:6—**13 Down**
- Jesus said, "All power is ____ unto me in heaven and in earth." Matthew 28:18 —**5 Down**
- "The Father judgeth no man, but hath ____ all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22—**9 Down**
- "We shall all ____ before the judgment seat of Christ." Romans 14:10—**1 Across**
- Outside the city of God are dogs and sorcerers, and who-soever loveth and maketh a ____ .Revelation 22:15—**14 Across**
- "Christ Jesus came into the world to ____ sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Timothy 1:15—**16 Across**

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

We would like to inform you of some upcoming meetings that will be held in several cities across the country in September of this year. Lynnford Beachy will be speaking at the following locations:

Windham, Maine Camp Meeting: Some brethren in Maine are hosting a camp meeting from September 1-4, 2004. You may need to bring warm clothing. For more information contact Mervin or Rosemarie Shoemaker at: (207) 892-2338. The camp meeting will focus on the Love of God and healthful living. There will be several speakers from across the country, including David Clayton.

Cañon City, Colorado Camp Meeting: Philadelphia Press in Colorado will be hosting a camp meeting at the Indian Springs Ranch, about 7 miles NE of Cañon City, from September 8-11, 2004. (The first meeting begins at 9 a.m. on the 8th.) For more information contact Richard Stratton at: (719) 547-1932. There will be several speakers from across the country.

Southern Minnesota: On Wednesday evening, September 15, and all day Thursday, September 16, 2004, we will be holding meetings at the Pipestone RV Campground Pavilion (across from the National Monument),

located at 919 N Hiawatha Ave., Pipestone, Minnesota, phone: (507) 825-2455. The Wednesday evening meetings will be held from 4:00-8:30 p.m., and the Thursday meetings will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by a fellowship dinner and afternoon meetings from 2:30-8:30 p.m. For more information contact Laurie Lewis at: (507) 825-2310.

Minneapolis, Minnesota: There will be meetings in Minneapolis on Friday, September 17, and Sabbath, September 18 in Room 303 of the Coffman Memorial Union Building, Minneapolis Campus, University of Minnesota. The Friday evening meetings will be held from 5:00-8:30 p.m., and the Sabbath meetings will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by a fellowship dinner and afternoon meetings from 2:30-8:30 p.m. Parking is rarely free on University grounds—and this one is no exception, not even on weekends. This will present a problem for Sabbath-keepers, but there is free on-street parking within 10 minutes' walking distance. (The on-street parking meters are free after 5 p.m. Friday evening and all day Sabbath.) If you have special needs, and require a ride from your car to the meeting place, please call (304) 673-2018 when you arrive, and someone will come to pick you up. For more information contact Chris Walega at: (612) 374-4683. *Editor*

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

by George McDaniel

Insulin resistance syndrome, a major cause of most of the chronic diseases of aging.

One of the most important hormones produced by the body is insulin, because it is essential for the production of energy. Insulin is essential for transporting glucose through the cell membrane into the cell where it becomes the primary source of energy. This, however, is only one function of insulin. A person who loses his ability to manage insulin effectively can develop not only diabetes mellitus, but also many other symptoms. This series of articles will focus on what insulin does in the body and what results when insulin is not working as it should.

Some of the functions of insulin are:

- * Assists in transporting glucose into the cell.
- * Causes excess glucose to be changed into substances that can be used for future needs – glycogen and fat.
- * Helps regulate life span and aging.
- * Helps store many excess nutrients.
- * Helps with immune system function.
- * Stimulates cell division – builds tissues.

Most people are aware that insulin lowers blood sugar. This is not its primary function, however, or even its intended function. Insulin is the only hormone that will

decrease blood sugar. There are many that will raise blood sugar, including cortisol, glucagon and adrenaline. Now if something is important to the body we will have redundant mechanisms to support it. The fact that we have only one hormone that lowers sugar and several that raise it tells us that the body is not designed to deal with large amounts of sugar. Man's original diet, given by God, consisted of fruits and seeds. Later were added green vegetables. Still later, after the flood, God gave man permission to eat flesh.

Fruit contains simple sugars that are processed quickly by the body. Seeds are high in fat and protein, but usually low in carbohydrates. Green plants are high in fiber but low in carbohydrates, fat and protein.

Our brain, nerves and red blood cells are the tissues that need glucose for energy. These are the cells that are very active metabolically. Muscle cells function better using fat for energy. This is especially true of the heart muscle, which needs a constant, steady supply of energy. Brain cells do not even need insulin to take in glucose. The major problem throughout most of human history has been to ensure an adequate supply of glucose to provide for the needs of the brain and nerves. That is why the body has several hormones to raise blood sugar but only one that can lower it.

What causes insulin resistance and why is it harmful?

Insulin resistance is caused by the exposure of cells to insulin. They are trying to protect themselves from the harmful effects of high insulin levels. They decrease the number of insulin receptors and regulate the activity of remaining receptors down to decrease the effect of insulin. It is somewhat like coming into a room with a bad odor. Pretty soon you don't notice the odor. You have become desensitized. If you leave the room and come back in, you smell it again because you have become resensitized. As the cells are exposed to insulin they become a little bit resistant to it. To compensate, the pancreas puts out more insulin. Thus the cells become more and more resistant and the pancreas puts out more and more insulin.

Insulin resistance syndrome has not been a problem until recently. The changes in the American diet have caused the problem. Many of the foods we are used to eating contain a lot of starch. Starch is digested quickly and absorbed into the system as glucose. Just think how much of your diet is made up of wheat and flour products, rice, potatoes, and corn. When eating any type of grain, it is better to eat whole grains rather than refined, but the amount needs to be limited.

We have thought that carbohydrates should be divided into simple and complex. We have also thought that we should eat simple carbohydrates sparingly, but could eat most of our calories as complex carbohydrates. A hundred years ago and more, this wouldn't be as bad as it is today. However, since the development of the refined and processed food industry, there is now available a great variety of refined complex carbohydrates that didn't exist even fifty years ago. The way these products are advertised make them seem essential to our lifestyle.

A better way to consider carbohydrates is with fiber and without fiber. Fiber carbohydrates include vegetables that grow above ground, such as leafy vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower and asparagus. Non-fiber carbs have little or no fiber, such as potatoes, pasta, rice, etc. The fiber slows down the absorption of the sugar. Also, this type of food has fewer carbs. What the body experiences with non-fiber carbs is sugar. A potato is, to the body, just a big lump of sugar.

We will now consider what insulin does in the body and why too much can be harmful.

Relationship of insulin to life span and aging

We think of life span as being fixed. Humans, for instance, have an average life span of 76 years. The oldest known modern human was a French woman who recently died at age 122. If you read the obituaries in the

newspaper, you will find many dying in their 50s, 60s and 70s. In lower forms of life, such as worms, life span depends on the environment. If there is plenty of food available, they will reproduce and die in a few weeks. If not, they can last until conditions are better, which may be as much as twenty years. It is now known that the variability in life span is regulated by insulin. Other lab studies done on animals such as rats and dogs, show that animals on calorie restricted diets live longer than those who eat whatever they want. Fifty-nine different species tested so far have responded to this anti-aging strategy. They not only live longer, but look and act younger. When food intake is cut by one third, the life span increases by one third. This would amount to an extra 25 years for humans.

Some people are following a very strict, low calorie diet called Cronie's Diet, to accomplish longer life. There is an easier way to do this. This is to eat only nutrient-rich foods. Make sure each meal contains the nutrients you need. Avoid junk food. Stop eating before you feel full. Then fast for one or two days, once or twice a month. Fasting also provides the anti-aging benefits of increased production of human growth hormone, which declines rapidly after age 40.

There is a lot more that could be said about anti-aging, but it will have to wait for another time since this series of articles is about insulin resistance. The harmful effects of insulin resistance syndrome are due to abnormally high levels of insulin, due to eating too much high carbohydrate food.

After an ideal meal, blood glucose levels will rise slowly and moderately. Insulin will be released in amounts to metabolize and store the low levels of increased glucose in the blood, and then the amount of insulin in the blood will decrease to a very low level. Under these conditions, cells become insulin resistant slowly and only to a slight extent.

If one's diet contains a lot of carbohydrates, particularly simple sugars and refined carbohydrates, the blood sugar level goes up rapidly and the pancreas releases a large amount of insulin to deal with what is perceived as an emergency situation. The sugar levels peak rapidly, due to the source of glucose. The pancreas has put out more insulin than needed, so the blood sugar drops below normal. The person then feels hungry and weak, so will have a snack to get him through to the next mealtime. This snack will probably be something high in sugar and starch, such as a doughnut or a sweet roll, and maybe a cup of coffee with sugar. The blood sugar will go up again, but will be low again before the next meal. This roller coaster effect causes the cells to be exposed to frequent high insulin levels. They become resistant so, in order for the body to stay in balance, the pancreas puts out more insulin to compensate. Eventually, it takes constant high insulin levels to get


the glucose into the cells where it is needed for energy and to keep the blood sugar at normal levels.

If all the cells became resistant at the same time and to the same extent, there wouldn't be as much of a problem. The difficulty is that all the cells don't become resistant. The liver becomes resistant first, then muscle tissue, then the fat cells. The liver can manufacture glucose from certain amino acids by a process called gluconeogenesis. Insulin acts to suppress this process. The sugar in our blood, then, comes from two sources: the food we eat and the liver. The amount of sugar in the blood when we wake up in the morning is mostly sugar that the liver has made. Normally, it doesn't make much sugar at night. If the liver becomes resistant to insulin, the restraint is removed and when we wake up in the morning our blood sugar is high. This is one cause for a high fasting blood sugar, which is a symptom of diabetes mellitus.

The next tissue to become resistant is muscle tissue. Insulin assists muscle cells to burn sugar for energy. If the

muscle cells become resistant, they can't utilize all the sugar that was just made by the liver. The liver makes too much, the muscles can't use it very well, so the blood sugar goes up.

The fat cells don't become resistant as quickly as the muscles. They eventually do become resistant, but it takes longer. The action of insulin on fat cells is to change sugar to fat and store it in the fat cells. So, until the fat cells become resistant, the person becomes more and more fat. Eventually, the weight will reach a plateau and level off, but it may be one-hundred-fifty pounds or three hundred pounds before the fat cells become insulin resistant. This kind of weight gain is hard to lose.

Some tissues don't become resistant, such as the endothelium of the arteries. The importance of this will be seen later as we continue this series. 

(George McDaniel is my father-in-law, and has been a registered nurse for many years, which, along with much research, has taught him many useful health principles.)
Editor)



Questions and Answers

by Lynnford Beachy



Question: How could Christ's soul be in the grave?

"I was reading the book, *God's Love on Trial*, and it states, 'The soul of Christ rested with His body in the tomb.' Acts 2:31 states that Christ's soul was not left in hell (the grave). Now my understanding of a soul is that the only way it can exist is by the spirit (breath) of God and the body combined to make a living soul. The spirit goes back to where it came from, God, and the body goes to the dust. I know Acts 2:31 does say that Christ's body did not see corruption.

"How do you get a dead soul when it takes a combination of two things to make a living soul? A dead person does not possess this combination.

"If Christ's spirit was in the tomb with Jesus, we have to take for granted they were separated from each other until the Father resurrected Jesus or we would have had a living soul in the grave instead of a dead person. And we know by Scripture that Christ's soul died. Isaiah 53:10-12: 'He hath poured out his soul unto death.'" *Oregon*

Answer:

This is a very good question. You are right that Christ's soul died as it is written in Isaiah 53. Part of the problem with understanding what happens to a soul at death stems from the difficulty of defining the words spirit and soul. They are a little hard to define because they have various meanings, and at times are used interchangeably. For

example: "His **soul was grieved** for the misery of Israel." (Judges 10:16) Compare with Daniel 7:15: "I Daniel was **grieved in my spirit** in the midst of my body." Both a soul and a spirit are the part of a person that can be grieved. Gesenius calls both, "the vital principle... The seat of the senses, affections, and emotions." (*Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*) The Hebrew word *nephesh* (soul) was translated "mind" (15 times). The Hebrew word *ruach* (spirit) was also translated "mind" (5 times). Some people have the idea that the spirit of man is simply the vital power of God that sustains life. This definition can apply to "spirit" sometimes (i.e. Job 27:3), but certainly not all the time.

Jesus said, "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 10:28) Here Jesus said that when a person dies his soul is not killed. This does not happen until the time when God will destroy both the soul and body in hell. (This is called the "second death"—see Revelation 20:14.) The word "soul" in the above text signifies a part of man that is not destroyed at the first death, even though it remains in an unconscious condition. "The dead know not any thing." (Ecclesiastes 9:5)

A cassette tape could be used to demonstrate this. While a tape is in a tape recorder, information can be recorded onto it, and played back from it, but as soon as the tape is removed from the tape recorder, it can no longer function.

While the tape is removed from the tape recorder, you could destroy the tape recorder without harming the tape. You could put the tape in a new tape recorder and again, you could record onto the tape and play back the information that is stored there. However, if you destroy the tape, there is no way to retrieve that information. It would be completely lost.

The Bible uses the word soul in a similar way in the verses mentioned above. While the body is living the soul can learn, and function, but when the body dies the soul can no longer function. At the resurrection, God can create a new body, and put the same soul or spirit in it, and the same person will come forth. At the second death, when God will destroy both the soul and body of the wicked, that is like destroying the tape, with no chance of recovering it. "They shall be as though they had not been." (Obadiah 1:16)

The Bible says, when a person dies, "Then shall the dust [body] return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12:7) Some people read this and suppose that only the life force—the power of God that keeps a person alive—returns to God at death, and nothing more. However, the same author tells us: "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" (Ecclesiastes 3:20, 21) The same life force that sustains a man's life also sustains a beast's life. If this is all that goes back to God, then the spirit of the beast would go upward to God as well. But the Bible says the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth, while the spirit of man goes upward to God. There is obviously something more that goes back to God than just the force that keeps him alive. It is like the cassette tape mentioned earlier. The complete record of a man's existence, his person, his identity, goes back to God in an unconscious condition, awaiting the resurrection when it will be reunited with a body to live, breath and function again. The very same person that dies will come back in the resurrection even though his body will be changed.

When Stephen died, he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:59) He was not asking the Lord to receive the power that sustained his life, but his very person, his identity. When Jesus died upon the cross, He cried out, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46) Jesus was not commending His life force into His Father's hands, but His very identity, His existence.

I do not know how God retains the soul or spirit of a person after death, other than the fact that it is unconscious. I do not envision God literally collecting tangible souls, marking them, and storing them in a storehouse. This may be figurative language to signify the reality that God will bring the same person back to life at the resurrection. When the Bible says where the soul or spirit goes at death it signifies whether it will be resurrected or not. The spirit of a beast

goes down to earth, signifying that it will not come back to life. The spirit of a man goes upward to God, signifying that each man will live again, and God will retain the record of that man so he can come forth at the resurrection.

The Bible is clear that when a soul is destroyed the entire being is destroyed. (Matthew 10:28; Ezekiel 18:20; Obadiah 1:16) Yet, that does not take place until the second death, after the 1,000 years of Revelation 20. According to Jesus, the soul is not killed until that time. (Matthew 10:28) Between the time of death and the resurrection, the body is dead, but the soul is kept in an unconscious state until the resurrection. I do not know how God does this, because we are not told. Somehow God retains it, and when it says that Christ's soul was not left in the grave, I believe that it indicates what type of death he suffered. His soul was in the grave with His body, not united in life, but resting in death, a death so complete that only His Father could raise Him from the dead. (Hebrews 5:7)

The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23) The wages of sin is not the first death, but the second. That is what Christ came to save us from. His soul died, something that does not occur for man until the second death. Remember, Christ came to "taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9) If Christ had only tasted the first death for us, He could only save us from the first death. But he came to save us from the second death, and must have tasted that for us. When Christ "poured out his soul unto death," He was yielding up His eternal life. He made this conscious decision when He cried out, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

There is something unique about Christ tasting the second death, of course, because He was raised from the dead, even though the wicked who experience the second death will not be resurrected. (Obadiah 1:16) His absolute purity and sinlessness, which none of the wicked will have, enabled Him to be resurrected, even after He tasted the second death for us.

I hope this helps to answer your question.

Question: Did Christ begin on the first day of creation?

"I was comparing Genesis 1:3, 4 to Genesis 1:14-19 and had to ask myself why did God create light on the earth twice? Then I remembered that Jesus said he was the light of the world (John 8:12) and Christ was the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15). So do non-Trinitarians believe Jesus first comes onto the scene at Genesis 1:3, 4?" *Alaska*


Answer:

Thank you very much for your question. Christ was "the firstborn of all creation," which could also be rendered, "born before all creation." (*The New Englishman's Greek Concordance and Lexicon*, by Wigram and Green) The latter seems much more reasonable since the next verse says, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in

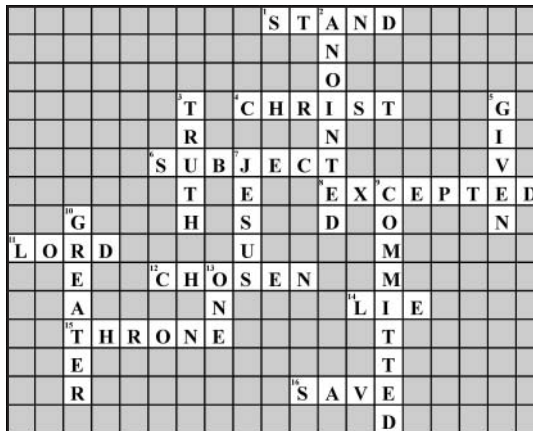
earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” (Colossians 1:16) This verse (along with others, such as John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2 and Ephesians 3:9) places Christ before all things created, thus eliminating any possibility that Christ Himself was created.

These texts also show that Christ existed before the time spoken of in Genesis 1:1, which says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Through Solomon, Jesus declared, “When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” (Proverbs 8:27-30)

So, in answer to your question, the Bible declares that Christ did *not* “first come onto the scene at Genesis 1:3, 4.” I cannot speak for all non-Trinitarians (for there are many different shades), but I can assure you that the Bible does not support the idea that Christ began His existence on the first day of creation, for He pre-existed “all things created.” (Colossians 1:16)

I hope this helps to answer your question. 

Answers to Crossword Puzzle on page 7

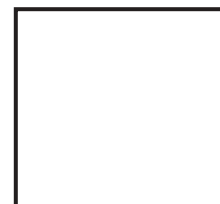


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