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Jesus

This is where things really get fun as we uncover the 'unsearchable riches' that we have once we have received Jesus Christ into our lives. As mentioned in the last lesson, the law of God (10 Commandments), were given to mankind to reveal that we couldn't live holy and blameless lives in our own strength. Sin is real and we need a Savior.

Therefore, because of His great mercy, God sent Jesus who lived a holy, sinless life while fulfilling all of the righteous requirements of the law and then voluntarily laid down His life on the cross for the punishment of our sins so that we would be forgiven. He was and is our substitute.



'For He (God the Father) made Him (God the Son, Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (Jesus).'

2 Corinthians 5:21



Not Works

With this in mind we are to now have our focus solely on Jesus as our God and Savior and not rely on our own works to save us.

'For by grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.'

Ephesians 2:8, 9

We cannot earn entry into heaven. No amount of good works can save us. Our en-

-try is secured totally by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

How important is it that I understand who Jesus is?

There are many false religions around today, - these are commonly called 'cults'— many of these claim to use the Bible and even refer openly to Jesus Christ. However, a person's eternal welfare is dependent on who they understand Jesus to be. Speaking about Jesus, the Bible says,

'Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'

Acts 4:12

Some believe that Jesus is merely a good teacher, a prophet, a created and lesser god, others that He is an angel, and yet others that He is the brother of Satan! With so many different interpretations it is pretty obvious that we are not all talking about the same person! So who is the Jesus to whom the above verse refers?

Who is Jesus?

Though some seem to be confused the Bible makes some pretty profound statements about Him:

'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world Received up in glory.'

1 Timothy 3:16

Who is Jesus?

Who did that last verse say was manifest in a human body? It said, 'God was manifest in the flesh'. Interesting. Hold that thought and let's see what else the Bible has to say about Jesus' identity.

The opening verse of the Book of John in the New Testament says,

*'In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.'*

John 1:1

What we need to understand here is that 'the Word' is a title given to Jesus. This becomes clear when we read further in John,

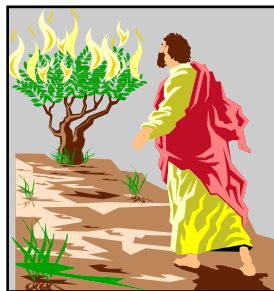
'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...'

John 1:14

Though most would acknowledge Jesus as the, 'Son of God', He is better understood as 'God the Son'. He is both, but in our day the former term may perhaps suggest less of Him.

How important is it that we get this right? To explain we need to consider an important episode in Israel's history.

When God introduced Himself to Moses just prior to bringing Israel out of Egypt - where they had served as slaves for 400 years— He used a very powerful title of Himself.



'Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they say to me, "What is His name?" what shall I say to them?'

'And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."'"

Exodus 3:13-14

*'For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be
upon His shoulder,
And His name shall be called
Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'*

Isaiah 9:6

God said that His name was 'I AM'. All Jews are familiar with this story, it is something they are taught from an early age.

Now let's pick up the story 1300 years later as Jesus is questioned about His identity by the Pharisees.

'Therefore, I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.'

John 8:24

In this verse the pronoun 'He' has been added to the original text in an attempt to aid understanding. Jesus said,

*'You will die in your sins
if you do not believe that I AM!'*

The Jews of Jesus day knew exactly what He was claiming. In this same chapter (John 8), Jesus culminates His discussion with the Pharisees by saying,

'...before Abraham was, I AM.'

John 8:58

And the Jews response is shown in the next verse,

'Then they took up stones to throw at Him...'

John 8:59

They did this because in their mind He had blasphemed i.e made Himself equal with God.

How important is that to have the right Jesus? There is no salvation unless we understand and believe on the Jesus, Who is God manifest in the flesh.

Jesus is Amazing!

He is the uncreated God through whom all the worlds (and all people) were created,

'God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.'

Hebrews 1:1-2

This infinite God voluntarily laid down His divine power and rights and became a man and walked among us.

'Jesus, who being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!'

Philippians 2:6-8

He demonstrated the love of God by voluntarily laying down His life for us.

'Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down ones life for his friends.'

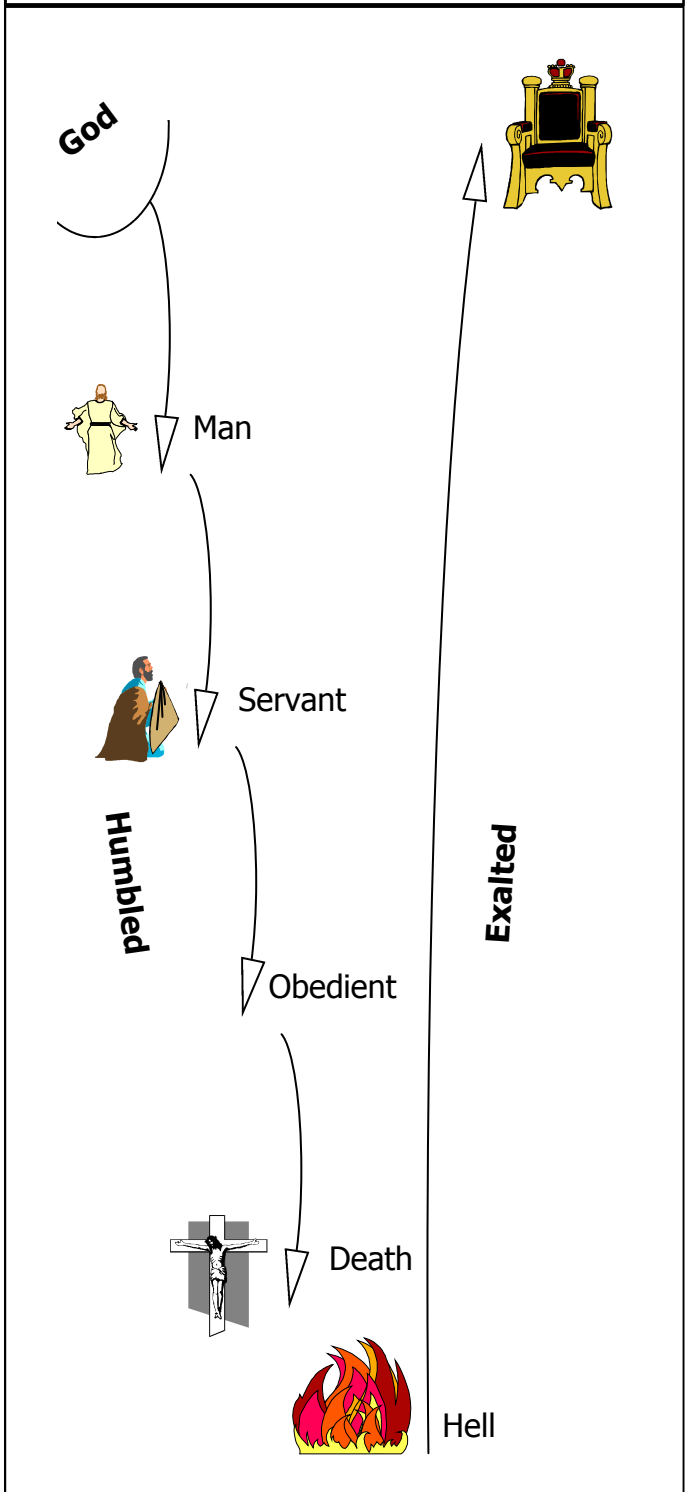
John 15:13

He demonstrated the power of God by conquering hell and death...

'And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His hand on me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the Last. I am He who lives and was dead and behold, I am alive forever more. Amen. And I have the keys of hell and death.'

Revelation 1:17-18

Justification by faith is one of the greatest truths in the whole of Scripture. It means God accepts us *Just-as-if* we had never sinned. Do you understand it? Give yourself this test. List all your activities, then ask yourself; 'Am I doing these things in order to be saved, or because I am saved/' If the answer is, 'In order to be saved,' then you need to think again.



Jesus in You

He now calls His people (the Church) to demonstrate His love and power until He returns.

'And Jesus came and spoke to them saying "All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'"

Matt. 28:18-19

He now lives inside the individual who invites Him in,

'that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.'

Romans 10:9

'To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you the hope of glory.'

Colossians 1:27

He calls us now to live a higher life.

'If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.'

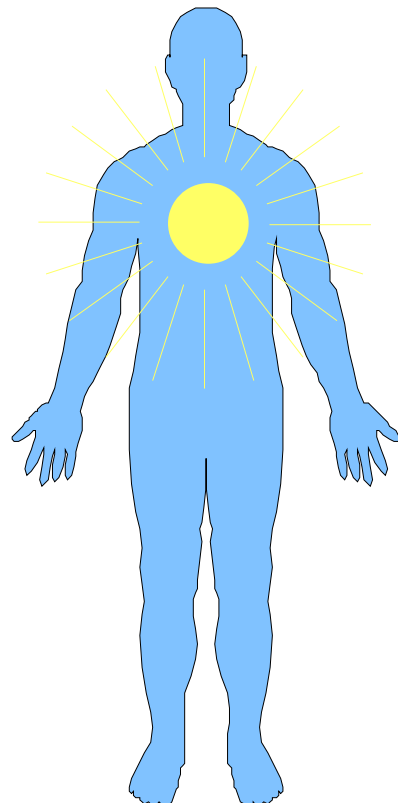
Colossians 3:1-3



He says that if you abide in Him and His word abides in you, that He will fulfill your desires...this is for real!

'If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.'

John 15:7 (Amplified Bible)



Baptism

Now that Christ is in you, you will have a desire to follow His leading through His word. So...you may ask...where do I start?

Once you have received Him He asks you to follow Him through water baptism. Water baptism identifies us with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection through full immersion in water.

'Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.'

Romans 6:4



When Jesus was baptized He declared to John the Baptist that He needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:13-15). In saying that He meant that He was about to fulfill all that had been written about Him (in the Old Testament). We likewise commence God's plan for our lives in burying the old life (signified by baptism).

'When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water and behold the heavens were open to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him.'

Matthew 3:15

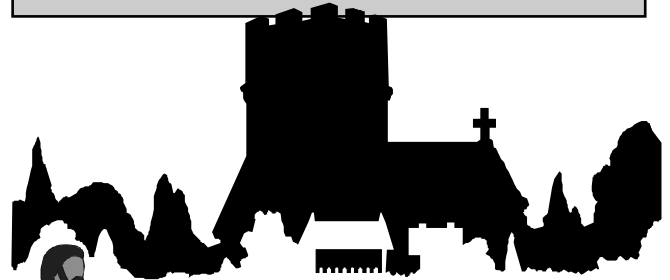
Water baptism is an outward act of obedience and faith which represents an inward reality and change. It also marks the commencement of our Christian walk. Through baptism we become Christ's ambassadors.

'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.'

Galatians 3:27

'Our Lord knew what He had come to do, and His baptism is the first public manifestation of His identification with sin with a conscious understanding of what He was doing. At baptism He visibly and distinctly and historically took upon Him His vocation.'

Oswald Chambers



During the Second World War a village in France was heavily shelled and sustained much damage. In the town square stood a statue of Christ. The shrapnel blast of artillery shells severely damaged the statue. The toes, hands and lips of the figure were either totally removed or extremely disfigured.

Rather than patch up the effigy the people of the town prepared a plaque to be put at its base. It read, 'Here stands a statue of Christ, to some it may appear incomplete, but we the townspeople of ... are His hands, feet and lips'.

Through baptism you effectively become Christ's hands, feet and lips. Christ will go where you go, He is saying what you speak and He will be shown by your acts of love.

Have you ever realized that Jesus did not say 'I am the resurrection and the life' after He rose from the dead, but prior to it (John 11: 25)?

What does this imply? It implies that Jesus was not the Resurrection because He rose from the dead, but He rose from the dead because He was the Resurrection.

Take strength in your new beginning because the Resurrection now lives in you!

Questions

1. What would you say to someone who is trying to get into heaven by doing good works (Ephesians 2:8-9)?

2. How many ways are there to get saved (Acts 4:12)?

3. Why is it important who we believe Jesus to be (John 8:24)?

4. What is the significance of Jesus use of the title 'I AM'?

5. According to Philippians 2:6-8 what were the downward steps Jesus took for you?

6. Jesus is both in heaven and at what other location according to Colossians 1:27?

7. Baptism represents death, burial and resurrection. How is your baptism a death, burial and resurrection?
