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“AND JESUS CHRIST”

THE blessings of redeeming love – our Savior compared to a precious pearl. He illustrated His lesson by the parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, “who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” Christ Himself is the pearl of great price. In Him we find all the glory of the Father, the fullness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His person. The glory of God’s attributes is expressed in His character. Every page of the Holy Scriptures shines with His light. The righteousness of Christ, like a pure, white pearl, has no defect or stain. No work of man can improve the great and precious gift of God. It is without a flaw. In Christ are “. . . hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). He is “. . . made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).



All that can satisfy the needs and longings of the human soul in this world and in the world to come is found in Christ. A knowledge of Christ is eternal life. It is more important than anything else in this world. In considering this knowledge the apostle Paul was led to exclaim, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8).

CHRIST IS THE MEANS OF OUR RE-CREATION

The knowledge of Christ is the means whereby the sinner is re-created:

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. — Colossians 3:10

Through this knowledge we partake of the divine nature:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. — 2 Peter 1:3 (see also Ephesians 3:19)

We are commanded to grow or increase in the knowledge of Christ:

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. — 2 Peter 3:18

CONSIDERING CHRIST

We are told to consider Christ – to keep Him in mind and contemplate His life of ministry on earth and in heaven:

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. — Hebrews 3:1

It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we meditate on His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will grow, and we will be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.

As we consider Jesus continually we will be transformed into the likeness of the One we adore:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 3:18

Paul tells us how important the knowledge of Christ was to him as a minister:

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. — 1 Corinthians 2:2

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. — Ephesians 3:8

THERE IS SALVATION IN NO OTHER

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. — Acts 4:12 (see also John 14:6)

Christ is to be lifted up in all His beauty:

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. — John 3:14-15 (see also I Corinthians 1:24)

Christ, the Son, is to be honored, even as we honor the Father:

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. — John 5:21-23

CHRIST'S EXISTENCE PREDATES ALL CREATION

Christ existed before His birth in Bethlehem, and all things were created through Him. Christ, the Word, was with God in the beginning – so far back in the days of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man. He was before this world and before the angels:

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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. — John 1:1-3 (see also Micah 5:2; Colossians 1:14-19)

The ages comprehended in this phrase cannot be grasped. It is not for us to know when or how Christ was begotten; but we know that He was the Divine Word before this world was creat-

ed. The last prayer of Christ (John 17) also reveals that Christ existed with the Father before the worlds were created:

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

CHRIST IS DIVINE

In many places in the Bible Christ is called God. God has, in direct address to the Son, called Him by the same title:

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. — Psalm 45:6

The casual reader might take this last verse to be simply the psalmist's ascription of praise to God, but when we turn to the New Testament, we find that it is much more. We find that God the Father is the speaker, and that He is addressing the Son:

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. — Hebrews 1:8

The name "God" was not given to Christ in consequence of some great achievement, but it is His by right of inheritance; for, says the writer to the Hebrews, "He hath *by inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:4). A son always rightfully takes the name of the father, and Christ, as "the only begotten Son of God," has rightfully *inherited* the same name. To a greater or less degree a son is a reproduction of his father. He has, to some extent, similar features and personal characteristics to his father. Christ however, is the "express image" of the Father's person (Hebrews 1:3), and as the Son of the self-existent God, He has by nature all the attributes of Deity.

CHRIST IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. — Hebrews 1:6

CHRIST TOOK HUMAN NATURE

When Christ came to this world, He came as a human being, not as some sort of half God, half man. He was fully divine, and fully human. He took upon His sinless nature, our sinful nature, degenerated by thousands of years of sin, with all the liabilities of humanity:

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. — Hebrews 2:16-17 (see also 1 John 4:1-3)

Christ was “made like unto his brethren”. As one Christian author in the 19th century stated, “He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam” (“The Desire of Ages,” p. 638.4); for “the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

Not only did Christ take a human body, but he took upon Him a human mind, capable of being tempted in every respect as is ours, all the while retaining His divine nature:

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. — Hebrews 4:15

As God, Christ could not be tempted any more than He was not tempted from His allegiance in heaven. But as Christ humbled Himself to the nature of man, He could be tempted. He had not taken on Him even the nature of the angels, but humanity, perfectly identical with our own nature, except without the taint of sin. He had a human body, and a human mind. He trod our earth as man. He had reason, conscience, memory, will, and affections – faculties of the human mind – which were united with His divine nature. He formed a righteous character as we must do, and thus became our pattern or example – the second Adam.

It is important for us to distinguish between character and nature. Character is not made up of the various faculties of the mind we have mentioned, for those are common to all of us – they are a part of our nature – character, on the other hand, is formed by how we choose to use those faculties. The choices we make and the actions we take form habits, and these habits form character. Christ left us an example of the character we must have. The following verses depict how Christ is miraculously able to give us a new start, erasing the evil character we may have previously formed, enabling us to form a new character, united with the Divine nature.

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. — 1 Peter 2:21

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. — Philippians 2:5 (see also Romans 12:1-2; Ezekiel 36:26-27)

Christ exercised no divine power that is not available to us; for He says, “. . . the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12), and again, “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30).

Christ became one of us (in human flesh) for several specific reasons:

1. That God could communicate to man through Christ:

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. — 2 Corinthians 5:19

Communication was cut off between man and God because of sin. Intercession, Christ’s mediation to restore that communication is one of the great objects in the plan of salvation. He began this work from the moment Adam fell.

2. That He could reconcile man and God:

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

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

He was “. . . the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).

3. That He could be tempted:

... for God cannot be tempted ... — James 1:13

But, as a man He could be tempted. It was necessary to see God's character tested by our earthly, sinful environment in order to really know God:

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. — Hebrews 2:18

4. That He could be our perfect example:

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. — 1 Peter 2:21

5. That He could die for our sins:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. — Hebrews 2:9

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. — Philippians 2:8

6. To fulfill the role of both prophet and priest before reigning as king:

• Jesus while on earth held the office of a prophet:

To be a prophet – one who speaks to man on behalf of God – the glory of God must be veiled in human flesh:

This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. — Acts 7:37

• When He ascended, He took up the work of priest:

A priest is one who speaks to God on behalf of men. Jesus is qualified to be a priest:

For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. — Hebrews 5:1-2

• **And when Jesus comes again He will reign as king:**

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. — Revelation 19:16

Jesus exercised no power we cannot have. He had trials, was tempted, and knows by experience what we must endure. We can overcome only by taking up His cross and following Him; receiving by faith the same power by which He overcame. Thus He left us a perfect example, “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1Peter 2:21).

Dear reader, “. . . 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” (Hebrews 12:1-3),