

FOLLOWING *Christ* AND FISHING *FOR* *Men*

CLARENCE SEXTON

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CLARENCE SEXTON

SECOND EDITION

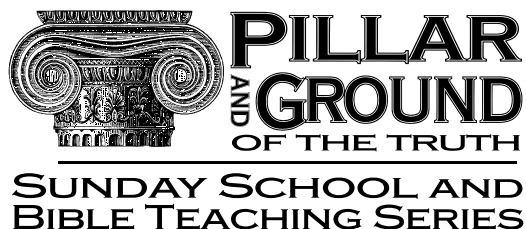
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FOLLOWING CHRIST AND FISHING FOR MEN

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Dedication

*T*his book is dedicated to my friend John Stancil. Johnny has served the Lord as a faithful witness from his early days alongside Dr. Curtis Hutson to this present moment.

John Stancil loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and he loves lost souls. He and his dear wife Yullie are everlastingly at it. They have been a steadfast encouragement to Evelyn and me.

Carrence Hutson
Feb 5:42

Introduction

*R.*A. Torrey once said, “My one ambition in life is to win as many souls as I possibly can. It is the most worthwhile thing in life.”

In the pages to follow, you will find a biblical approach to personal evangelism. This book is meant to be more than a series of lessons on personal soul winning. The purpose of this book is to stir Christians to follow Christ and fish for men.

The Lord Jesus Christ has the power to save and transform lives, and He has chosen to use human instruments to get the glorious gospel message to dying men.

It is the responsibility of every Christian to go in the power of the Holy Spirit to the lost, give them a clear presentation of the gospel, and bring them to the place of receiving or rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

Every Christian is either a road or a roadblock in the carrying out of this Great Commission. Allow the Lord to use you to win souls!

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CHAPTER ONE

JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD



“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

John 20:31



he Bible is God’s revelation of Himself to us. It is our Lord’s desire for us to know Him. We come to know the true God in the person of His Son the Lord Jesus.

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

As we consider John chapter twenty, our Lord Jesus Christ had gone to Calvary, bled and died for our sins. He had been buried in a borrowed tomb and had come forth from the grave alive forevermore. He had revealed Himself as the resurrected Saviour to His disciples. In that appearance, one of His disciples, Thomas, was not there. In John 20:24-31 the Bible says,

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print

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of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The Bible says in verse thirty-one, “*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*”

We live in a day when many people speak about Christ but are not talking about the Christ of the Bible. The Christ of the Bible is Jesus of Nazareth, the virgin-born One, Emmanuel, “God with us.” Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

This portion of John tells us that Thomas worshiped the Lord and cried out, “*My Lord and my God.*” Jesus Christ accepted this worship. Was Thomas wrong? No, Jesus Christ is Lord and God.

Jesus said that Thomas was one who saw and believed. Then He said, “*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*” I identify with those who “*have not seen and yet have believed.*” I have not seen Him as Thomas saw Him. I have not seen with human eyes the prints in His hands, but I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God

This is the essential matter with which we must deal. Bible doctrine and theology have always been important, but never more important than today. The Lord Jesus left us ordinances. Those are things He ordered that we do. The ordinances are baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Both of them picture His death. The Lord also left us doctrine, which is our belief and teaching. When we speak of doctrine, we receive our belief and teaching from the Bible.

When you hear the word *theology*, that word means the science or study of God. We say that our theology is biblical theology because the Bible is our source for what we believe about God.

When we say that this theology is systematic, we mean by that that we do not lift one passage out of the Bible and try to prove something from that one Bible passage, though the Bible happens to be the source of that proof. We do not lift that one passage out and say, “This is why we believe what we believe.” We take all the Scriptures together, all sixty-six books of the Bible, and systematically look at a particular subject to construct our theology.

Concerning what we believe about life and how we live, we say we have a philosophy. Everyone has a philosophy of life, but the Christian needs to be sure that he develops his philosophy from his theology. And the theology must be biblical and systematic theology. It must be from God’s Word.

We believe what we believe about life because of what we know to be true concerning God. Many people have ideas about life, and they try to make their theology fit their ideas. That is the wrong way to go about it. We come first to our theology, what we know to be true about God and what we find from the Word of God concerning who God is. Then we develop a philosophy of life out of what we believe and know about God.

You can have a philosophy about life that seems very logical to the world and may be acceptable to many people; however, according to the Bible, you are going to live and die without Jesus

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Christ and spend eternity in hell if you do not know the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour. The Bible says in John 20:31, *“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”*

There is a question all of us must answer. Let us consider that question in Matthew chapter twenty-two. There was a controversy in this passage between Christ and the Pharisees. The Bible says in Matthew 22:41-46,

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

The question Christ put to those Pharisees is the question that He puts to us: *“What think ye of Christ?”*

In Matthew 16:13 the Bible says, *“When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”* The disciples answered Him. They gave the answers that people were giving—John the Baptist, Jeremiah, or Elijah. Then the Lord Jesus asked, *“But whom say ye that I am?”*

Simon Peter stepped forward. In my mind’s eye, I see the other disciples listening intently as Peter spoke for all of them. Peter said, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God

Jesus said to Peter, *“Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”* I say to you, who is Christ? *“What think ye of Christ?”*

The world-renowned humanitarian, Albert Schweitzer, was not a Christian, but he wrote a book about Jesus. In his book, he did a terrible thing. He made Jesus to be someone who was mentally ill. Mr. Schweitzer, no doubt, thought he was doing something quite intellectual, but what he did does not reveal as much about Jesus as it does about Albert Schweitzer.

As intellectual as Albert Schweitzer claimed to be and as renowned as he was, he was a fool. The Bible says the man who lives and dies without Jesus Christ is a fool.

Often people want to know what you think about the church or what you think about a certain preacher or a certain group of Christians, but let us concentrate our efforts on this question, *“What think ye of Christ?”*

If Jesus is who He says He is, He is God. You need to know God as your Saviour. If Jesus Christ is not God, if He is simply a creation of God, then God is not directly involved in salvation.

Jesus is indeed God, and God is directly involved in salvation. God demanded the payment for our sin. God is the only holy, pure, perfect One who could demand the payment of our sin debt.

The Lord Jesus not only demanded the payment of our sin debt, He made the payment. Christ, who is God, coequal, coexistent, eternally existent with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, became a man without ceasing to be God. He bled and died for our sins.



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Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God

When we think of the Trinity, we think of the persons of the Godhead. When we say that the Holy Spirit is God and Christ is God—coequal, coexistent, eternally existent with God the Father—we speak of God in three Persons. We use the expression God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

When we use the word *person*, we cannot use it in the individualistic sense in the Person of the Godhead. We speak of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We do not have three gods; we have one God expressed in the Person of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



*We believe what
we believe about
life because
of what we
know to be true
concerning God.*

Christology is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the Creator God, not a created god. The question of who Christ is remains the foundational issue of Christianity. This is why there is such an awful attack on His Person. Christ is God, hence His pre-existence. Christ is the Creator, hence His pre-existence. Being God means He had no beginning. There is nothing to be said that is true of God that is not true of Christ.

THE LORD ACCEPTED WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT SAID ABOUT HIM

Consider that our Lord accepted what the Old Testament said about Him. After the resurrection of Christ, on the Emmaus road, He had a conversation with the disciples who were traveling that road. We take up part of that conversation in Luke 24:25-27,

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and

Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God

all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Our Lord Jesus accepted what the Old Testament declared about Him, that He is God. In Isaiah 7:14 the Bible says, “*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*” The Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, accepted that this passage was about Him.

In Isaiah 9:6 the Bible says,

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his
name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty
God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

These are titles. Let us consider two of them. The Lord Jesus accepted these titles for Himself. He accepted that in Isaiah 9:6 He is the mighty God. He accepted that He is the everlasting Father.

I declare to you that He is who He says He is, or He is a liar and an imposter. But He is not a liar; He is not an imposter. He is the mighty God. He is the everlasting Father. This Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus is God. He accepted what the Old Testament said about Him.

Christian people need to know what they believe and why they believe it. They need to know it in order to tell unbelievers. They need to take the Bible and say to unbelievers, “This is what I believe, and this is why I believe it. I find this in the Word of God.”

JESUS CHRIST AFFIRMED THAT HE IS GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the Gospel according to John, the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself in John 3:13. As Jesus was speaking with Nicodemus, the Bible says,

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“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” With the natural mind, without faith, we cannot understand this.

Often we use an expression that is not correct. We mean to say something correct, but it is not entirely correct. We say that Jesus “left” heaven. But when we speak of God, we speak of the indivisible God; He cannot be divided. In John 3:13, Christ speaks of being on earth and in heaven at the same time. He is affirming that He is God.

In John 5:17-18 the Bible says,

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Those listening had no doubt about what Christ was affirming. He made Himself equal with God.

There was One who came to this earth, who was born of a virgin, who grew up in Nazareth, who walked among men. This Jesus of Nazareth was not just a man; He was the God-Man. He was fully God and fully man. He became man without ceasing to be God. He said that He is God.

Jesus Said He Is Equal with God in Works

John 5:19 says, *“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”*

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Jesus Said He Is Equal with God in Knowledge

Christ said in John 5:20, *“For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.”*

Jesus Said He Is Equal with God in Power

He continues in John 5:21, *“For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”*

Jesus Said He Is Equal with God in Honor

He says also in John 5:22-23, *“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.”*

Notice other examples of His claims. John 8:58 says, *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”* There is no doubt in our minds about this expression, *“I am.”* When Moses faced the responsibility God gave him to stand before the Pharaoh, he asked, *“Whom shall I say has sent me?”* God said, *“I AM.”* The Lord Jesus Christ said of Himself the same thing that God said to Moses.

The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of New Testament. He affirms Himself that He is God. In John 10:30, the Lord Jesus said, *“I and my Father are one.”*

John 19:7 says, *“The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”* The Jews were concluding their case for Christ to be put to death.

Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God

In Matthew chapter twenty-six, the Lord Jesus spoke about who He is. The Bible says in Matthew 26:62-66,

And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

His enemies went to Pilate and said, “He said He is God.”

In John chapter four, when the woman at the well finally came around to saying something about the Messiah, He said to her, “*I that speak unto thee am he.*” Jesus Christ declared Himself to be the Messiah.

JESUS CHRIST IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS, AND WE CAN KNOW GOD

If the Scriptures teach us that Christ accepted what the Bible says about Him in the Old Testament, if He affirmed in the Gospel records that He is God, where does this leave us? It leaves us with the wonderful truth that because Christ is who He says He is, we can know God.

Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God

In John chapter fourteen, we find a conversation between Christ and one of His own. The Bible says in John 14:5-9,

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Christ declared to Philip, “I am who I say I am.” Christ is God, and we can know God.

No wonder the Bible says in Acts 4:12, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*”

Dear ones, this is not just a good idea; it is absolutely the most important matter in life that Jesus is God and that we can know the Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour.

Only those who know Christ as their personal Saviour can tell those who do not know who He is. We are His witnesses!



There is nothing to be said that is true of God that is not true of Christ.