

...Set For the Defence of the Gospel. (Phil 1:17)

# DEFENDER OF TRUTH

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**T H E M E :**

# WHO IS THIS JESUS?

# DEFENDER OF TRUTH

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# EDITORIAL

This edition of Defender of Truth focuses on Jesus Christ. We answer the question Who is this Jesus? Jesus Christ is the central figure of Christianity which according to Wikipedia is practised in one form or the other by roughly 2.4 billion people comprising around 31.2% of the world's population. The majority of the adherents of Christianity do not appreciate the important facts regarding the life of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible. Many people call Him Lord but do not obey Him. The consequence of this is dire (Luke 6:46-49). We provide insights into the personality of Jesus Christ. Please read and be edified.

Previous editions of the magazine can now be viewed and downloaded from the website [www.defenderoftruth.com.ng](http://www.defenderoftruth.com.ng). The site also has articles, books, audio and video sermons which the reader will find edifying.

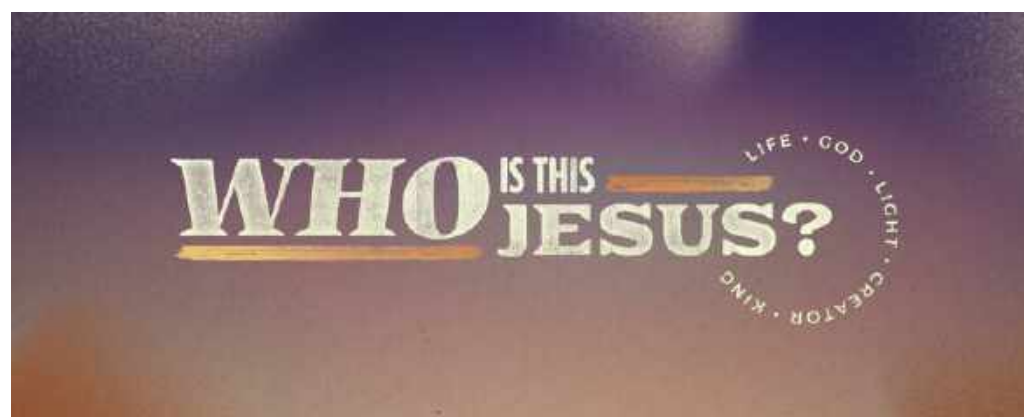
## WHO IS THIS JESUS?

by **Afolabi A. Akinyemi**

*"When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'"*

*Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven'. (Matthew 16:13-17)*

*"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They said to Him, 'The Son of David.' He said to them, 'How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool''? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?' And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore". (Matthew 22:41-46)*



Jesus Christ realized that people of His day had different notions of who he was hence the questions to his disciples and the Pharisees. The answers given by His disciples and the Pharisees also indicate differing opinions regarding the personality of Jesus Christ. The disciples mentioned the names of some of the prophets that had been ascribed to Jesus but Simon Peter said who Jesus was exactly while the Pharisees were expecting a Messiah who would sit on David's throne and liberate the Jews from the rule of the Romans.

Similarly, in the present day, there are differing views on the personality of Jesus Christ. These views range from the mundane which do not have any relevance to the spiritual well-being of man to those that challenge the historicity and personality of Jesus Christ. For instance, an article on the CNN website titled Was Jesus a Man of color? Why this question

matters more than ever, claims that *"Many scholars and archeologists now agree that Jesus was most likely a brown-skinned, brown-eyed man — more akin to a 'Middle Eastern Jewish' or an Arab man"*<sup>1</sup>. The article says, *"The debate over the color of Jesus is one of the oldest running arguments in religion"*<sup>2</sup>. A debate over the colour of Jesus' skin does not do any good to mankind. Whether Jesus was white, brown or black-skinned does not detract from His purpose for coming to the world. The Bible in Matthew 1:21 says *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."*

On the other end of the spectrum, are views which question the facts regarding the reality of the life and personality of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament. These views could be surprising to many Christians particularly when so-called 'Christian' writers express these views. In an article in Truth magazine, Daniel H. King quotes from three such writers thus:

Albert Schweitzer. "The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and died to give his work its final consecration never had any existence .... He comes to us as one unknown, without a name, as of old by the lakeside He came to those men who knew him not."<sup>3</sup>

Rudolf Bultmann: "It seems then that the form of the earthly no less than the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us. For all the inestimable value of the gospels they yield us little more than a whisper of his voice: We trace in them but the outskirts of his ways."<sup>4</sup>

R. H. Lightfoot: "I do indeed think that we can now know nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus since early Christian sources show no interest in either, are moreover fragmentary and often legendary, and other sources about Jesus do not exist."<sup>5</sup>

Some other views accept that Jesus Christ was born and lived on the earth but He did not perform miracles, did not resurrect and He is not the son of God. These views fundamentally question the New Testament's authenticity and the Apostolic writers' integrity. Those who believe the truth revealed in the New Testament are thus accused of having 'blind faith'. Yet faith by its Bible definition rests on evidence therefore genuine faith in God and Jesus Christ His Son cannot be blind.

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"* (Hebrews 11:1). In his book, Why Believe the





Bible, Doy Meyer says this about faith and evidence “The kind of faith that the Bible talks about is based upon evidence from history. We do not believe something just because we feel like it. We believe something happened in history that affects us today. Further, because it happened in history, then we can investigate the claims just like we would investigate anything else in history”.<sup>6</sup>

The New Testament provides the answers regarding the personality of Jesus Christ. The inspired writers make it clear that they were recording events that really happened.

*“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were **eyewitnesses** and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself **have carefully investigated everything** from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught”<sup>7</sup> (Luke 1:1-4)*

*“That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen with our eyes**, which we have **looked at** and our hands **have touched** —this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.<sup>8</sup> We proclaim to you what we **have seen and heard**, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ”<sup>8</sup> (1 John 1:1-3)*

Please note that Luke says his account of the life of Jesus Christ was based on eyewitnesses and that he had thoroughly investigated everything before writing an account to Theophilus. John on the other hand states that the Apostles heard, and saw the events in the life of Jesus Christ hence they testified of it. These eyewitnesses suffered persecution and many were killed because they proclaimed the facts of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-32; 7:54-59). If these eyewitnesses were liars, why would they continue to proclaim these facts which are the fundamentals of the gospel under the threat to their lives? (1 Cor. 15: 1-4; 12-19)

God inspired these eyewitnesses to write the New Testament (2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Eph. 3:1-5). (Please refer to the first edition of this magazine for more details regarding the inspiration of the Bible).<sup>9</sup> The Bible reveals the following about Jesus Christ.

1. He was a real man, who lived, was crucified and resurrected on the third day.
2. He is the Son of God. (John 5:17-20)
3. He is God. (Philippians 2:5-6)
4. He has the authority to forgive sins. (Mark 2:1-12)
5. He was sinless. (1 Pet. 2:21-23)
6. He will judge the world. (John 5:21-27)
7. He is the author and giver of life. (John 5:21; 6:48; 11:25)
8. He is the only way to salvation. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)

This Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6) For salvation all men must believe in Him (John 3:16; 8:24), repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30); confess him as the son of God (Acts 8:36-37) and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

<sup>1</sup> Was Jesus a man of color? Why this question matters more than ever | [www.CNN.com](http://www.CNN.com)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Modernism and the Quest for the Historical Jesus (1) – Truth Magazine | [www.truthmagazine.com](http://www.truthmagazine.com)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Modernism and the Quest for the Historical Jesus (1) – Truth Magazine | [www.truthmagazine.com](http://www.truthmagazine.com)

<sup>6</sup> Roper Doy. Why Believe The Bible? Athens, Illinois. Truth Publications Inc. 2017

<sup>7</sup> New International Version

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Magazine – Defender of Truth - [www.defenderoftruth.com.ng](http://www.defenderoftruth.com.ng)

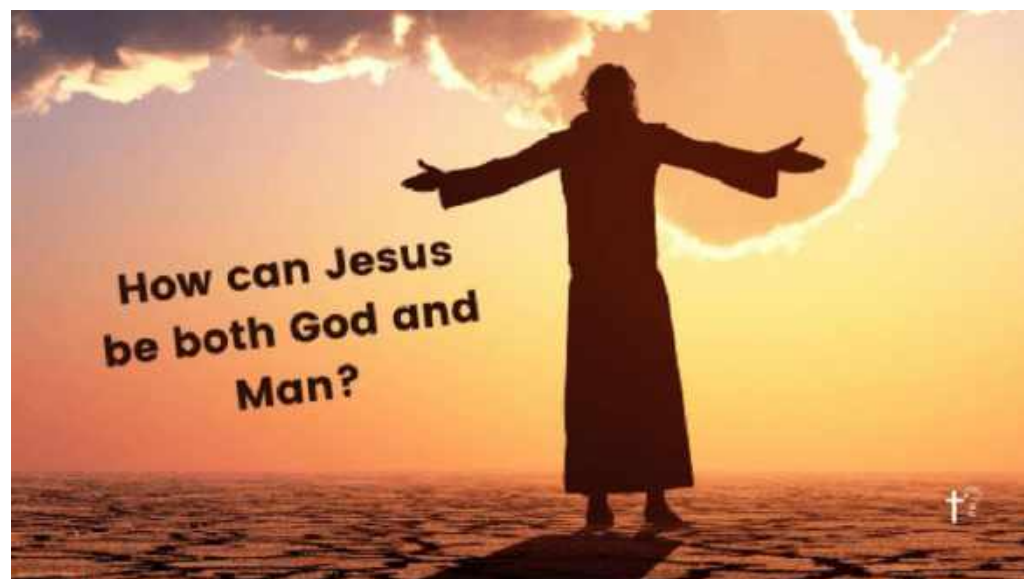
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# JESUS CHRIST, MAN OR GOD

by Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba



The topic of the Person of Jesus Christ has been misunderstood by many in different quarters. There is considerable disagreement within the religious world concerning the Person of Jesus. Some deny the human nature of Christ and thus are false prophets according to the Bible – “and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (I John 4:3). Some others deny the Divine nature of God; and unlike Thomas and the Ethiopian Eunuch, many refused to confess Him as God or the Son of God (John 20:28; Acts 8:37). Rather, some have chosen to oppose Christ and Christians on this very subject just like the Jews of Jesus' days did – “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” (John 5:18).

This writing aims to explore and shed light on the dual nature of Jesus while He was on earth. According to the New Testament, Jesus is one Person with two natures—a human nature and a divine nature. He is both God and Man. To understand this, we need to examine the following designations as used in the New Testament about our Lord Jesus Christ: the “Son of Man” and the “Son of God.”

## Jesus – The Son of Man

The phrase “Son of man” is found several times in the New Testament. In almost all of these instances, it is in reference to Jesus Christ as He often refers to Himself as the “Son of Man.” This expression emphasizes the humanity of Jesus. One passage that helps to prove the human nature of Jesus is John 1:14: “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.” In this context, Jesus is the Word that was made (or became) flesh (John 1:1-3). The phrase “was made” shows a point of beginning. Jesus was born physically of the virgin Mary in the town of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1). The inward person was eternal for He was God (John 1:1-3).

Also, another passage that emphasizes the human nature of Christ is Hebrews 2:16-18. Observe carefully this verse: “For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of

Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” This passage teaches clearly that Jesus had to become human in order to bring forgiveness of sins to the world – again, emphasizing His human nature.

Also, I Timothy 3:16 shows that Jesus who was God was manifested in the flesh: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.” Indeed, Jesus took on the nature of men to live in a body of flesh. Some denied this truth in the 1st century as indicated in II John 7: “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.” If we fail to grasp the human side of Jesus, we will have a warped view of the Messiah. Those who deny this are called false prophets and Antichrists (I John 4:1-3).

## Jesus – The Son of God

Jesus is also described as “the Son of God.” This is a phrase that emphasizes His Deity, His Godhood. One Bible passage that we may turn our attention to is John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Here, Jesus is called the only begotten son of God. We should not have a problem grasping how this emphasizes His Deity. Just as the son of a lion is a lion, the son of a tiger is a tiger, and the Son of God is God.

John affirms the Deity of Jesus in John 1:1-3: “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.” Consider Paul's statement in Colossians 2:9: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Godhead or Godhood is the state of being God. (Like manhood is the state of being a man.) One passage that we must also turn our attention to is Philippians 2:6-8 where Paul affirms both the Divinity and humanity of Jesus: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” This word “form” carries the idea of being identified with the nature, being, personality of God. Jesus also came and took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

Jesus claimed to be God, was proven to be God, and the apostolic writers verified that Jesus is God. Jesus accepted worship and this proves His Deity: Matthew 14:33 “Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.” Matthew 28:9 “And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.” Cornelius refused to accept worship as he was an ordinary man (Acts 10:25-26). At His trial when the high priest put Jesus under an oath as to whether He was the Christ, the Son of God,





Jesus affirmed, "It is as you have said", (Matthew 26:64) In John 10:30, Jesus declared that He and the Father were One.

The Jews understood what Jesus was saying. They charged Him with claiming to be God. (10:33). Jesus did not deny their charge! The multitudes and religious leaders understood that Jesus claimed to be God – *"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."* (John 5:18). In the Old Testament, the prophet, Isaiah speaks of Jesus as the Mighty God: *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

Peter confessed him as the Son of God: *"When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:13-18)

Many other passages such as Colossians 1:15-18 and Hebrews 1:2 verify Jesus to be the creator and present in the beginning and therefore God.

## Conclusion

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has a dual nature: the Son of man, His humanity; the Son of God, His Deity. Failure to accept any of these will be a clear opposition to God's Word and will make one a false teacher (I John 4:1-3). Because Jesus is God, He has the right, and the power to speak and command. We need to listen to all that He says. We can fully trust and expect Him to fulfil all His promises. If we fail to grasp the human and Divine sides of Jesus, we will have a warped view of the Messiah. Have you fully trusted in Jesus the Son of God? Have you obeyed him? *"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."* (Acts 22:16).

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# JESUS CHRIST IN PROPHECY

by Bro Opemipo Olusola

The Bible tells us that long before the world began, God planned to bring redemption through Christ to all who would choose to believe and follow after Him (1Pet.1:19-20). God knows the sinful world would need a saviour. He knew we would need to be set free from the guilt of our sinful passions and their eternal consequences in Hell (Rm.6:23). Then He made a way by sending His one and only Son, so that we could receive forgiveness and find new life and hope through Him (John.3:16; Acts.2:38)

This redemption plan in Christ Jesus is the heart of all the Old Testament prophets' prophecies, from Moses to John the Baptist. Jesus is the fulfilment of the scriptures. He is the word. He is the light of the world, He is the way, the Truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but through Him. Jesus has fulfilled every single prophetic word, Matt.5:17; John.14:6; Acts.13:27-33. Fulfilled prophecies are one of the strongest evidences that the Bible is a special divine revelation, the word of God.

## Prophecy

This is a "declaration of future events, such as no human wisdom or forecast is sufficient to make – depending on a knowledge of the innumerable contingencies of human affairs, which belongs exclusively to the Omniscience of God; so that from its very nature, prophecy must be divine revelation".<sup>1</sup> The word "prophecy" comes from the Greek word propheteia" which signifies "the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God"..... It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means. It is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future"<sup>2</sup> (Gen.20:7; Deut.18:18; Rev.10:11;11:13). Prophecies must be beyond the power of man to foresee. All the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah fall into this category.



## Messianic Prophecies

There are probably no other persons in history whose life has

raised as many questions as Jesus's. His life teachings and deeds were of such a nature that His Twelve Apostles and closest followers were often amazed. But for Jesus Himself, the Hebrew (Old Testament) Scriptures were the keys by which He understood His vocation as the Messiah. A clear example of this comes at the end of Luke's gospel. After Jesus was crucified His followers were crushed. They had hoped that He would be the Messiah who would destroy the tyranny of Rome and restore the kingdom of Israel. But their idea of the Messiah was not God's idea. To His disappointed followers, Jesus said: "O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Lk.24:25-27). "For Moses wrote about Me" (John 5:39,46).

Throughout the scriptures, weaved through verse after verse in the Old Testament, are prophecies that speak of the Christ who was to come. Bible scholars have concluded from much research that hundreds of years before Jesus was even born, more than 300 prophecies were recorded to tell of His coming, His life and journey to the Cross, and of His Resurrection.

Here are some of the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus Christ

1. His virgin birth (Isa.7:14,9:6); Fulfillment (Matt.1:21-25)
  2. The place of the Messiah's birth (Micah.5:2); FMatt.2:1-6)
- Take note of the minute details which characterize some of the prophecies. There are two towns in Palestine named Bethlehem. Bethlehem in Zebulun – 6 miles northwest of Nazareth (Josh.19:15) and Bethlehem in Judea – Bethlehem Ephrath, 6 miles southwest of Jerusalem (Gen.48:7;35:9-27). Bethlehem Ephrath in Judea was the chosen village by God. It was so small and insignificant that it was twice omitted from the catalogue of towns in Judah (Josh.15, Neh.11:25ff). It is spoken of merely as a village in John 7:42.
3. The Lineage of the Messiah
    - i. Seed of the woman (Gen.3:15; Gal.4:4)
    - ii. Descendant of Shem (Gen.9:26-27; John.4:22; Rm.11:11ff)
    - iii. Seed of Abraham (Gen.12:1-3; 22:18; Gal.3:16; Acts.3:25-26)
    - iv. Seed of Isaac (Gen.26:4; Gal.3:16; Acts.3:25-26)
    - v. Seed of Jacob (Israel) (Gen.28:14; Gal.3:16; Acts.3:25-26)
    - vi. Tribe of Judah (Gen.49:10; Heb.7:14)
    - vii. Seed of David (2 Sam.7:12-14; Lk.1:32; Acts.2:29-36;13:23; Rm.1:3)
  4. Prophecies about the main events in the life of the Messiah





- i. His coming will be announced by a divinely appointed forerunner (Isa.40:3; John 3:1-3)
- ii. Messiah is to be anointed with the Holy Spirit (Isa.42:1; Matt.3:16-17; Lk.4:16-21; Acts.10:38)
- iii. His ministry to be in Galilee of the Gentiles (Isa.9:1-2; Matt.4:12-17)
- iv. He was despised, rejected of men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief (Isa.53:3; John 1:10-11; 12:37-38)
- v. Christ was predicted to enter Jerusalem in triumph (Zech.9:9; Matt.21:1-11; John 12:12-15)

5. Prophecies of the Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus  
There are at least some prophecies which were fulfilled in one 24-hour period surrounding the death of Christ. These prophecies were written up to 1000 years or more before the time of their fulfilment.

Below are some of these Prophecies and their fulfilment:

- i. Messiah is to be sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech.11:12; Matt.26:14,15)
- ii. The money is to be cast to the potter. (Zech. 11:13; Matt.27:9)
- iii. His disciples to forsake Him. (Zech.13:7; Matt.26:56; Mk.14:27)
- iv. Jesus was silent before His accusers (Isa.53:7; Mk.15:5)
- v. He was wounded and bruised (Isa.53:5; Matt.27:12-14)
- vi. His hands and feet to be pierced (Ps.22:16; Lk.23:33; John 20:25,27)
- vii. He was crucified with thieves (Isa.53:12; Mk.15:27,28)
- viii. He was to pray for His persecutors. (Isa.53:12; Lk.24:34)
- ix. The people were to shake their heads at the crucified one (Ps.22:7; Matt.27:39)
- x. The people were to ridicule Him (Ps.22:7,8; Matt.27:41,43)
- xi. The people were to be astonished (Ps.22:17; Isa.52:14; Lk.23:35)
- xii. His garments to be parted and lots cast (Ps.22:18; John 19:24)
- xiii. Messiah was to cry "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps.22:1; Matt.27:46)
- xiv. Not one of Messiah's bones would be broken (Exo.12:46; Ps.34:20; John 19:33,36)
- xv. His side to be pierced (Zech.12:10; John.19:34,37)
- xvi. Jesus was to be buried in a rich man's tomb. (Isa.53:9; Matt.27:57-60)

6. Prophecy about the Resurrection of the Messiah. (Ps.16:10; Matt.28:6; Acts.2:24-32)

7. Prophecy of the Ascension of Christ in the clouds to Heaven. (Ps.68:18; Dan.7:13-14; Mk.16:19; Acts.1:9; Eph.4:7-12)

8. Prophecy: Christ would be seated at the right hand of God. (Ps.110:1; Heb.1:3; 10:12-13; Acts.2:32-36)

## Conclusion

Only a divine mind could have conceived such a character through the centuries, recording these things about Him; and only a divine person could have fulfilled the predictions. This leads us to conclude that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that the Bible is a special Divine revelation.

To reject these scriptural facts is to become God's adversaries who shall be destroyed with everlasting fire (2 Thess.1:8). Therefore, let us repent of our sins and submit to the authority of Jesus Christ today for us to enjoy sweet fellowship with God both here on earth and in the eternal abode.

<sup>1</sup>Jenkins Ferrell. *Introduction to Christian Evidences* Guardian of Truth Foundation 1981

<sup>2</sup>Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words.

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# JESUS CHRIST, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

by **Kayode Adekunle**

*"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world" 1 John 4:14*

*"Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." John 4:42*

The love of God for man started manifesting even before man was created. Out of all the creatures of God, it is only man He created in His own image (Gen. 1:26). This love continued to show even when he was eventually made. Man was put into the Garden of Eden to have everything he needed for sustenance. When God saw that man was lonely in the Garden, He created a woman to be His companion (Gen 2:18; 21-23). Despite the comfort created for man, God gave him strict instruction in Gen. 2:17 *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

However, records in Gen. 3:1-7 show that Adam and Eve allowed Satan to deceive them and they defied the order of God. Consequently, God pronounced His judgement to both Adam and Eve in Gen. 3:13-24. God's judgement is highlighted by the pronouncement on man both the physical and spiritual death. Physical death, *"going back to the dust"* (Gen. 3: 19) and spiritual death *"separation from God"* (Gen. 3:22-24). Interestingly, while God was pronouncing His judgement, He also mentioned the hope of reconciliation between Him and man and the avenue of salvation for him. In Gen 3:15 God said, *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."* The scriptures later reveal that *"the Seed"* mentioned here that will save man from Satan is Jesus Christ (Gen. 22:18; Galatians 3:16). Paul captures the whole scenario perfectly in his letter to the Romans when he says *"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life"* (Rom 5:17-18).

## Jesus Christ the Saviour in Prophecy

The desire of God to send His Son, Jesus Christ into the world to save mankind which was signalled in Gen 3:15 was actualized

in the New Testament, however, His eventual birth, life and work were adequately chronicled in the Old Testament. God used many of His prophets to prepare the mind of the world for the coming of Christ and the purpose of His coming. Isaiah revealed the nature of His birth in Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."* Micah prophesied about His place of birth in Micah 5:2. The purpose of His coming as the spokesperson of God was clearly stated by Moses who conveyed the words that came from God to the Israelites *"I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."* (Deut. 18:18). In the New Testament, the angel sent to Joseph said to him that Mary *"will bring forth a Son and He will be called Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins"* (Matt. 1:21)

## The Mission of Jesus Christ on Earth

*"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."* (Gal 4:4-5) The mission of Christ on earth is summed up by His statement in John 3:17 *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved"*.

*"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."* (1 Tim 1:15) The whole idea of the plan of salvation is for God to use Christ as the ultimate sacrifice needed for the salvation of man. Christ says *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."* (John 15:13). John further says in 1 John 4:10 that the act of using Christ as *"propitiation"* for our sins came out the *"love"* that God has for mankind, since it is clear that without the *"shedding of blood there is no remission of sin"*. (Heb. 9:22). Christ, shedding His blood on the cross is very fundamental in this regard. Mankind receives forgiveness, justification and redemption through the shedding of His blood (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7). The death, burial and resurrection of Christ also symbolize salvation through baptism (Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Pet 3:21-22) and these give man the hope of eternal life. Peter says this in 1 Peter 3:1 *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* and in 1 Corinthians 15:21, Paul says *"For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man."*



## Salvation Through the Gospel.

The power of God to save sinners from eternal damnation lies in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). For any man to be saved, he must hear the gospel, believe it, repent of his sins, confess Christ as the Son of God and must be baptized into the body of Christ which is His Church (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2: 36-47; 8:30-40; Rom 10: 9-10). In Eph. 1:13, Paul says this to the Ephesians *“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise”*

Although the Bible makes it clear that the act of salvation which came through the grace of God is not a result of man's works (Eph. 2:8; Titus 2:11), the issue of obedience through repentance and baptism on the part of man is paramount. Man must submit his heart to the gospel after hearing it and take other necessary steps to salvation for him to be saved. We have various examples of people who became saved as a result of their obedience to the gospel in the New Testament (Acts 2: 36-47; 8:12; 8:30-40; 10:1-48; 16: 11-15; 16:25-34).

## Jesus Christ Saves Through His Body

*“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”* (Eph. 1:22-23).

*“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”* (1Cor 12:13).

The New Testament makes it clear that man's salvation can only be guaranteed when he obeys the gospel and is baptized into the body of Christ, His Church. Acts 2:47 states that the people who obeyed the gospel on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem were *“praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*

The Church established in the New Testament belongs to Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18) and it is described as His body (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18; 24). The implication of this is that the Church of Christ is not a denomination. All denominations belong to men and they practice the doctrines of men, this no doubt makes their practices *“vain”* before God Matt 15:9. God and Christ do not support denominations (John 17:20-21; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 1:10). Denominationalism is lawlessness (Matt. 7:21-22). The Church of Christ *“is the pillar and ground of the truth”* and is solely established for the salvation of man (Eph. 3:9-11; 1 Tim.

3:15). The Church of Christ is the kingdom of Christ on earth (Col 1:12-13) and any man who wants to gain eternal life after their existence on earth must become a citizen in this kingdom through obedience to the gospel of Christ.

## Conclusion

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16). The desire of God for man is for him to be saved from eternal damnation that is awaiting him as a result of sin. The Bible says *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*. Consequent upon this, *“the wages of sin is death”* (Rom 3:23; 6:23). God paid the ultimate price by sacrificing His only Son so that man can be saved.

Paul told the Athenians *“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”* (Acts 17:30-31).

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# JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY

by *Oladapo Olawale*

The Church (also the body of Christ – Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23) is the greatest institution because it has a spiritual and eternal destiny (1 Corinthians 15:22-24). It comprises a group of people who have been rescued from the domain of darkness and called into God's marvellous light through obedience to the gospel of Christ (Colossians 1:13). The church existed in God's eternal purpose and plan (Ephesians 3:8-11) that those who will obey and submit to Christ are to be called out and separated by Him from the world of sin; they are to become God's chosen and royal people, and a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). The church is thus not a man-made institution subject to man's whims and caprices.

Christ promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18) and fulfilled that promise on Pentecost in AD 33 (Acts 2). Since Christ founded the church, it belongs to Him. In effect, everyone who has been called belongs to Christ as they are now said to be in Christ (Philippians 1:1; Romans 8:1; Colossians 3:3). To be in Christ means to be closely connected to Him and subject to His control or rule. The church is subject to Christ's rule and direction. Those who are in Christ are members of Christ's body and He is not only the head of the body but also its saviour (Ephesians 5:23)

## The Headship of Christ over the Church

The Bible records several descriptive terms employed to illustrate Christ's relationship and authority over the church. Jesus Christ leads the church as a shepherd leads the flock. In John 10:14-16, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd of the flock. The Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 5:4 describes Jesus in this sense as the Chief Shepherd or in what may be described in today's often misused term of General Overseer. As the Chief Shepherd or General Overseer, Jesus exercises supreme authority over His flock (the church) who expectedly follow Him. As the good shepherd, Jesus gave himself for His sheep.

In another sense, Jesus is described as the Head of the Church just as the husband is the head of the wife. As the bride of Christ, Jesus loves the church so much that He gave himself for it; husbands are enjoined to similarly love their wives (Ephesians 5:25).

The phrase 'body of Christ' is a very significant description of Christ's rule and relationship with the church. 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 20 explains to us how this relationship works in comparison to the physical body. We can summarise the following from this description:

- a. The human body is so connected to the head that without the head the body cannot function because

each member of the body receives instructions from the head (mind) to perform its function. The body of Christ is joined to Christ and every member of Christ's body receives the necessary instructions and messages to perform their work from Christ (Ephesians 4:15 -16). The church does not receive instructions from any human founder or General Overseer, purporting to be its head, because Christ does not share His reign with any human and there can be no two heads since there is one body and one Lord over it (Ephesians 4:4-5).

- b. The body of Christ is one (Ephesians 4: 4-5). The members of the body of Christ are not the many denominations that exist in the world today as some have erroneously claimed. Christ is not head over many dysfunctional bodies working discordantly.
- c. Rather, Christians are members of Christ's body and are so closely joined to one another and ultimately to the Head (Christ) with important individual roles to play as members of the body of Christ (Romans 12: 4-5; 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 20). Just as each member of the physical body works in harmony with one another, each member of Christ's body must function in unison, without schism or discord amongst one another (1 Corinthians 12: 24 – 25). When a member of the body is working at variance with the head, that member is either no longer receiving instructions from the head or it may be receiving mixed messages and not functioning well. Such 'member(s)' may as well be receiving instructions from a different head (not Christ); he may just be part of a different body like the many denominations that exist in the world today who though claim to belong to Christ are owned by human founders who head them and direct their affairs through human creeds and doctrines (Matthew 15:8-9).
- d. As Christ is the head of the body, the body (the church) is subject to Christ. Christ has absolute authority over the church since he is the *head over all things to the church which is His body* (Ephesians 1:23). As the parts of the physical body are subject to the mind, so also as Christians and members of Christ's body, we are subject to Christ in everything (Ephesians 5:24). We are bound to do what He commands and cannot exceed the bounds of what He has mandated for us. If we go beyond His word, we will be merely functioning without the Head (2 John 9).

Jesus' commitment to die for His church is the stamp of His authority or headship over the church. He is the Shepherd that



willingly laid down His life for His flock (John 10:11) and the bridegroom that readily died for His bride (Ephesians 5:25). Having paid the ultimate sacrifice to purchase His church (Acts 20:28), the church is subject to Christ rule. No man or any human institution can exercise or assume any rule or authority over the church because Christ alone died to purchase His church. Christ has absolute authority to direct the affairs of the church and particularly how it is to be organized and governed.

Christ rules and governs His church through His word. He promised to reveal all truth to His disciples through the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit moved the writers of the New Testament to reveal God's truth to us (1 Corinthians 2: 12 – 13; 1 Peter 1:25) and write down God's commandments for us (1 Corinthians 14:13) as a pattern to follow.

In the New Testament, therefore, we understand that the church is to be governed locally with Elders and deacons appointed (Acts 14:13; Titus 1:5). The elders have the command to keep watch over the flock, feed it and guard it against grievous wolves (Acts 20: 28 – 30). The elders are also known as pastors/shepherds/overseers (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5: 1 - 3). They are subject to Christ who as earlier mentioned is the Chief Shepherd or General Overseer. The elders serve alongside deacons as well as teachers and evangelists in a local church to perfect the saints and edify the body of Christ (Ephesians 4: 12). The elders and deacons must meet the qualifications specified in the bible for them to serve (1 Timothy 3:1 – 13; Titus 1: 6 – 9; 1 Peter 5: 1 – 4). They neither appoint themselves to lead the church nor claim to have received a revelation different from the gospel (Galatians 6: 6-9) that entitles them to rule and arrogate titles to themselves. Elders, deacons, teachers and evangelists do not approve of men esteeming them or their ideas above the written word of God (1 Corinthians 4:6)

The scriptural standard regarding the organization of the church is thus clear – Christ being the head of the church and every local congregation subject to Christ's rule (His word) is to be led by elders and deacons serving alongside teachers and evangelists and every member working towards edification of the local congregation.

There is nowhere in the scripture where the church is under a human general overseer, founder, pope etc. No local church or churches are subject to a Headquarters church under the control of one man or group. Such arrangement, alien to the New Testament is not only earthly or carnal but also amounts to a usurpation of the headship of Christ.

## Conclusion

Whilst many generally profess that Jesus is indeed the head of the church, they are still outrightly undermining and usurping His authority/headship over His church. Respecting the headship of Christ means respecting His word and doing away with every man-made pattern for organizing the church (John 14:15). The church of Christ does not originate from man, and it cannot be subject to man-made earthly patterns or organization and rule. Jesus Christ remains *the head over all things to the church, which is His body*, and we must heed His instructions (Ephesians 1: 22 – 23).

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# CELEBRATING JESUS CHRIST

by Jobalo Oshikanlu

**Bible Gems:** “There is only one God. There is also only one person who brings God and people together. That person is Christ Jesus, who became a man himself” (1 Timothy 2:5 EASY). “You can’t be saved by believing in anyone else. God has given people no other name under heaven that will save them.” (Acts 4:12 NIRV).<sup>iii</sup>

## How do People Celebrate Jesus?

Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and mankind, the only Saviour of the world. Celebrating Jesus means different things to different people. According to some, celebrating Jesus means honouring Him with public and/or private ceremonies of respect, festivity, dance, or rejoicing. To yet many others, celebrating Jesus means celebrating His birth at “Christmas” which is most popularly put at 25<sup>th</sup> December. Others seek to celebrate Him by celebrating “Easter” supposedly signifying His death and resurrection, with dates for these falling in March or April.

Still, some others believe that celebrating Jesus involves expanding our understanding of who Jesus is, according to the Bible, so that we can constantly do His will and appreciate Him more and more. But indeed, the question is what does the Bible teach us on how, if at all, to celebrate Jesus?

Should we celebrate Jesus and His birth on December 25 (or January 7 Eastern Orthodox)? If so, do you know why? Not trying to judge, but have you searched the Scriptures to understand why? As children of God, we should read and study the Scriptures to understand why we do what we do (John 5:39; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17). Where is it in the Bible that Jesus was born on December 25? Did Jesus celebrate His birthday, or did He tell us to do so? Or did any of the Apostles celebrate the Lord's birthday?

What does “Easter” mean and was this celebrated or commanded by the Lord or His Apostles? Are you led by the Word of God in the way you celebrate Jesus, or are you merely following human tradition? These are questions to ponder upon. Jesus warned: “You are experts at setting aside and nullifying the commandment of God in order to keep your [man-made] tradition and regulations” (Mark 7:9 AMP<sup>v</sup>).

## Some Interesting Facts Relating To Christmas:

1. The Bible has no mention of “Christmas”. Rather, “the word is formed of Christ + Mass, meaning a mass of religious service in commemoration of the birth of Christ”.<sup>v</sup> It therefore originates from the Roman Catholic church and not from the Lord.
2. The Bible does not give the date of Jesus' birth. The only time you will find December 25<sup>th</sup> recorded in a Bible as Christmas or as the Lord's birthday is when people eventually summon the effrontery to write it in there.

3. The Bible does not specify the number of wise men who went to worship Jesus (Matthew 2:1-2).
4. The wise men never saw Jesus in a manger. They met Him in a house (Matthew 2:11), nearly two years after His birth (verse 16).
5. The shepherds did not follow a star to Bethlehem to find Jesus. An angel informed them of His birth when they were in the fields with their flocks (Luke 2:8-10), which would not have been in the wintertime<sup>vi</sup>. They were the ones who saw Jesus in a manger (verse 16).
6. God did not institute a celebration of Jesus' birth in Christian worship. Rather, Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His death every Sunday in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). He said to “do this in remembrance of Me” (verse 24).
7. “The first notice of a feast of the nativity of Christ occurs in a Roman almanac ... which indicates that the festival was observed by the church in Rome by the year 336”.<sup>vii</sup>
8. “December 25<sup>th</sup> was already a festival day for the sun god Mithra and appealed to the Christians as an appropriate date to commemorate the birth of Jesus”.<sup>viii</sup> It is also derived from *Saturnalia*, the ancient Roman pagan festival honouring the agricultural god Saturn. Originally celebrated on December 17, Saturnalia was extended first to three and eventually to seven days. Kings granted amnesty to high-profile prisoners on this date and slaves were often given temporary freedom to do what they liked.<sup>ix</sup> Saturnalia celebrations are the source of many of the traditions we now associate with Christmas, such as wreaths, lights and candles, feasting and gift-giving. In other words, certain Christians in the Roman Empire Christians began to celebrate Christ's birthday on December 25, a date that since earlier times had been set aside for important pagan festivals, to safely adapt to Roman customs while honouring Jesus' birth.<sup>x</sup>

## What About Easter?

The Traditional Catholic Dictionary states that Easter is the “feast of our Lord's resurrection”.<sup>xi</sup> However, the same dictionary states that “...it is impossible to determine the date of its introduction.” It would not have been impossible to determine the date of introduction if the practice of Easter had been revealed in the Bible. Please note the following





facts:

1. There is no trace of Easter celebration, or celebration of the resurrection, in the New Testament.
2. Rather, "The Jewish Christians linked it [i.e. the resurrection] with the Passover and so observed it on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, regardless of the day of the week. But Gentile believers celebrated the resurrection on the Lord's day, Sunday. This difference was settled by the Council of Nicea in 325 AD" (which set the date for the annual observance of Easter).<sup>xii</sup>
3. "The English word comes from the AS Eastre or Estra, a Teutonic goddess to whom sacrifice was offered in April, so the name was transferred to the paschal feast".<sup>xiii</sup>
4. Even the Catholic Dictionary states that "The word Easter is derived from that of the Saxon goddess Eastre, the same deity whom the Germans proper called Ostara, and honoured ... as the divinity of the dawn".
5. What about the word "Easter" in the King James' Version of Acts 12:4? Well, it is not in any other version. In the original Greek New Testament, the word used here is "pasca" which in all versions is translated "Passover". Even in the King James', in all other New Testament appearances, *pasca* is translated as "Passover". And verse 3 of Acts 12 starts out talking about "the Days of Unleavened Bread", which undeniably is the feast of Passover. Hence, "Easter" in the KJV of vs.4 is either human error or human mischief in translation.

Easter cannot be found in the Bible as a religious holy day. We must inescapably conclude that Easter is the result of Jewish and pagan influences combined into the present form by the Roman Catholic church, having been named after a pagan goddess, and with many of its associated concepts being pagan in origin.

### The Celebration of Holy Days

Clearly, in no sense may anyone declare any day at all a holy or sacred day for Christians without the authority of God (Galatians 4:10-11). And, for certain, no true Christian should participate in any form of worship or spiritual celebration that is contrary to the Lord's will (John 4:24). The Holy Spirit warns: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (1 Corinthians 10:21-22).

While the Holy Spirit permitted Christians to eat food sacrificed to idols if their conscience allowed it (1 Corinthians 8:7-9; 10:25-29), the Lord forbids Christians to join in the worship services of those idols. He adamantly warns us to "Flee idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10:14). Consequently, whilst I may choose to benefit from the social and commercial traditions of Christmas and Easter, in no way am I permitted to celebrate Christmas as

the birth of Christ or Easter as His resurrection, or to encourage others to. These doctrines and practices descend from the minds of men and are additions to and violations of what Jesus Christ prescribes in worship. "And he said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, *"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.' And he said to them, *"You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!"* (Mark 7:6-9 ESV<sup>xiv</sup>).

### What Does the Lord Prescribe in Celebration of Him?

The New Testament Scriptures disclose what activities are enjoined upon Christians in celebrating the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. The Lord's Supper: "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us **keep the feast**, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). To "keep the feast" here (or "celebrate the festival" as translated in some versions) refers to the Lord's supper which the Lord commanded to be observed as a memorial of Him. As we can see, the passage also describes the accompanying conduct or manner of life required of participants in this feast. "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, *"This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."* (Luke 22:19)

Observance of this meal in the Lord's memorial entails the taking of unleavened bread along with the fruit of the vine (grape juice) every first day of the week (Sunday) as part of worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7). "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, *"Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."* In the same manner, He also took the cup after supper, saying, *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."* For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 11:23-27). This celebratory observance points to two great facts – the Lord's death, and to His final coming: the one past, the other future. The observance is to continue "till He comes".

2. Expanding our knowledge of Jesus Christ so that we can constantly do His will (2 Peter 3:18). In John 5:39, Jesus said "Examine the scriptures, since you think that in them you have eternal life. They also testify about me" (CEB<sup>xv</sup>). Amongst the ways to celebrate the Lord which we must learn is to serve by inviting others to learn more about Him.



*“Then Paul, as his custom was, went into them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ”** (Acts 17:2-3). 2 Corinthians 7:1 states that “Since we have these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God**” (ESV). What “promises” are being referenced here as motivating the celebration of the Lord by avoiding defilement? They are those contained vs.16-18 of the preceding chapter – “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be my people”. Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

3. Honouring the Lord daily in all personal activities (including acknowledging him as our real Provider and in all family and other ceremonies): “For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with **thanksgiving**; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” (1 Timothy 4:4-5). “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike...He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, **for he gives God thanks**; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, **and gives God thanks**” (Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 3:17).

## In Closing

We must call to mind that those who do not obey the gospel of Christ cannot celebrate Him successfully or meaningfully (Hebrews 5:8-9). There are spiritual consequences in participating in religious holy days as highlighted in this article given that such holy days are without Bible authority and are based solely on human tradition (Revelation 22:18-19). They also involve perversions of Bible principles and are mostly pagan in origin.

We urge you to shun disobedience and perversion by repenting (1 John 5:17; Acts 17:30-31), confessing your faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10), being baptized (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16), doing God's will (Matthew 7:21), and regularly worshipping God in spirit and truth which includes celebrating the Lord daily in the ways appointed by Him (John 4:24).

<sup>i</sup> Easy English Bible (EASY), Copyright © Mission Assist 2019.

<sup>ii</sup> New International Reader's Version (NIRV).

<sup>iii</sup> Except where indicated (as here), scripture quotations in this article are generally taken from the New King James Version (NKJV). Scripture quotations are set out in italics, in certain cases with emboldening for emphasis.

<sup>iv</sup> Amplified Bible (AMP), Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, CA 90631.

<sup>v</sup> Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, p. 162ff.

<sup>vi</sup> December 25 is wintertime in Bethlehem. Shepherds do not tend or keep flocks in the fields at night during winter.

<sup>vii</sup> New Encyclopedia Britannica, Christmas, p. 383.

<sup>viii</sup> The Lincoln Library of Essential Information.

<sup>ix</sup> Corroboration for this is found in the Bible in Jeremiah 52:31 – “Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison.”

<sup>x</sup> <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Christmas>.

<sup>xi</sup> See the Traditional Catholic Dictionary Online.

<sup>xii</sup> Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, p. 230ff.

<sup>xiii</sup> International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p.889.

<sup>xiv</sup> English Standard Version.

<sup>xv</sup> Common English Bible (CEB) Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible.

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