

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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## Who is Jesus?

by B. J. Clarke

A huge lump of something – a stone, supposedly – lay for decades in a shallow brook in North Carolina. People passing that way saw only an ugly lump and passed on. A poor man passing one day saw a heavy lump – a good thing to hold his door ajar – so he took it home. A geologist who stopped at the poor man's door one day saw the lump for what it really was – A LUMP OF GOLD! It was the biggest lump of gold ever found east of the Rockies.

In a similar way, many people looked upon Jesus. Some saw only a Galilean peasant and turned away. Some saw a prophet and stopped to listen. Some saw the Messiah and worshipped. Some saw the lamb of God and looked to him to save them from their sins. On at least two occasions during his earthly ministry, Jesus asked individuals whom they considered him to be (Matt. 16:13ff; 22:41, 42). In the 1970's, the popular rock opera, *Jesus Christ Superstar* depicted Christ as the original hippie. One of the song choruses asked continually, "Who are you?" and never answers.

How would you respond to the question, "Who is Jesus?" Some folks may ask you, some folks may say, "Who is this Jesus you talk about everyday?" You can answer them by saying, "Jesus is:"

### THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

#### **1. He Is The Promised Prophet.**

The children of Israel were promised by Moses, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15).

Centuries later the Jews were still looking for that promised Prophet. In fact, the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask John the Baptizer, "Who art thou?" (John 1:19). They asked John specifically, "Art thou that prophet?" John answered, "No." John

went on to explain that he was the one Isaiah prophesied of in *Isaiah 40:1-3* but he was not the fulfillment of the prophesy in *Deuteronomy 18:15-18*.

The apostle Peter, in his sermon on Solomon's porch, pointed to Jesus Christ as the Prophet spoken of in *Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22-26)*.

#### **2. He Is The Promised Messiah And The Son Of God.**

The Old Testament constantly speaks of one who would come as the anointed one of God. The entire 53rd chapter of Isaiah addresses the coming of the Messiah. One of the disciples of John the Baptist, a man named Andrew, followed Jesus to his place of abode and spent the day with him. He quickly perceived that Jesus was no ordinary human being. He quickly sought out his brother, Simon Peter, and declared, "We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:39-41). Sometime later, Peter made his own bold affirmation when he said to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

The woman in John 4 said to Jesus, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." Jesus saith unto her, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26). The miracles performed by Jesus demonstrated his Sonship and that he was the Christ sent from God. Nicodemus stated, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man 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" (John 20:30-31). Of course, the ultimate miraculous demonstration of his Sonship was his resurrection from the dead. Paul announced that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4).

A Jewish soldier had heard much about the character and teaching of Jesus. He went to his rabbi and said, "Rabbi, the Christians say that Christ has already come, when we claim that he is yet to come." "That's right," affirmed the rabbi. The young soldier answered back, "Well, when our Christ comes, what will he have on Jesus Christ?" "That," said the rabbi, "we do not know!" What else could he say? The Jesus of the Bible can never be equaled or surpassed.

#### **3. He Is The Promised King.**

From Genesis until the time of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, the concept of the coming Kingdom of God is threaded throughout the fabric of Scripture. *Genesis 49:10* proclaimed that the sceptre would not depart from Judah. Jesus, our Lord sprang out of Judah and rules today as King of the Kingdom foretold by the prophets.

David was told, "When thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his Kingdom... He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:12-13). This passage was fulfilled in its immediate sense when Solomon took the throne and built the temple. But it was also Messianic in its import. This is clearly seen by Peter's words on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the

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P. O. Box 251

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Ted J. Clarke ..... EDITOR

Phone ..... (501) 625-3217

*Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear... Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:29-33, 36).*

The conclusion is obvious. The promise of the Holy Spirit that David's seed would rule upon his throne over the Kingdom was fulfilled by Jesus when he sat down at the right hand of God exalted to receive the Kingdom. The Kingdom was established upon the day of Pentecost. Micah promised that one born in Bethlehem of Judea would become ruler (Micah 5:2). Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea (Luke 2:4-7) and grew up to become the ruler. Zechariah promised that a king would come to Jerusalem riding upon a colt (Zech 9:9). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy during his earthly ministry (Mark 11:1-11). Nathanael recognized the truth when he said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). Truly, Jesus is the promised King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

**4. He Is The Promised Immanuel.**

Approximately seven centuries before it occurred, Isaiah prophesied of the virgin birth of Jesus to Mary (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23). Isaiah further prophesied that they would call the child, "Immanuel." Matthew informs us that Immanuel, being interpreted is, God with us. Thus, Jesus was not only the Son of God, but also God the Son. The Word was God and the Word became

flesh (John 1:1, 14). God was manifested in the flesh in the person of Jesus (1 Tim. 3:16).

A Chinese man once said to a preacher, "You speak well, but why do you dwell on Jesus Christ? Let him alone and tell us about God." The preacher replied, "What sir, would we know about God if it were not for Jesus Christ who is the express image of the Father (Heb. 1:3)."

P.O. Box 128  
Southaven, MS 38671

*There is nothing on the earth that our Savior in Heaven can't handle.*

**"BUBBA SHOT THE JUKEBOX"**

by Ted J. Clarke

I like some of most kinds of music – classical, pop, country, jazz, bluegrass, old time rock and roll, etc. It is not likely I will ever learn to appreciate hard rock nor rap. Our music reflects our culture, giving us insights into how people think and live. Unfortunately, much music is a sad commentary on our society's moral bankruptcy. Many of the lyrics of modern hard rock and rap singers are profane and vulgar, speaking of immoral sexual acts, lawlessness, even of killing policemen. Songs have a way of getting into the minds of people and are capable of being spread more quickly across the country than ideas in books, magazines or newspapers. I remember reading sometime ago this thought: "I care not who writes the books of a nation; let me write their songs and I will control the minds of the people." I do not remember who said it, but it is a frightening thought in some ways, and it seems to be true in too many instances. We are a nation who in large measure has lost its sensitivity to the ungodly acts once committed by only a few, but now engaged in by many. The songs we sing or listen to have the effect of getting us used to immorality, so that we do not speak out against these things, even if we do not engage in them.

While many parents and adults criticize the younger generation for listening to and buying these ungodly songs (and rightly so), those same parents will often turn right around and listen to, sing along with, and buy songs that also promote immoral and wicked thoughts and

practices. We all need to remember Romans 2:1 –

"Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man. . . for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

God ole "Bubba," in the title of the song above, is a case in point of the influence songs can have on us for good or bad. Although I only heard the song a couple of times (and don't care if I ever hear it again), it seems that Bubba's woman left him for another. Bubba is in his favorite bar, crying in his beer, when the jukebox begins to play another "cryin' in your beer" type song, (or maybe it was his ex-woman's favorite song). Bubba cannot stand it any longer, so he goes to his truck, gets his .45 caliber pistol, returns to the bar and commences to silence the jukebox with a few shots from his gun. The law comes and Bubba is in more trouble. Time for another beer!

I could write a book about Bubba and what he did wrong, but someone else beat me to it and wrote a far better Book than I ever could. Before I ever became a Christian I was a lot like Bubba. Oh, I never shot a jukebox, but I've kicked a few of them. I thank God that "my woman" never left me (although she threatened to, and with good reason), but I used to drink a lot and feed my assorted miseries with sad songs on the juke box. Like Bubba, all that I ever got from doing that was more trouble; mostly from shooting off my mouth, not my gun.

In nearly thirty years of preaching I've seen and tried to help a good many Bubbas and Bubbettes, people whose lives are filled with sadness and disappointment. Too many of those have been like I was once; they think that they can cure their troubles and sorrows (or at least forget them) by turning to alcohol, drugs, or immoral relationships. Sadly, all of these simply bring more sorrow and trouble. I thank God that He spared my life to find a better way and to tell others about Him.

On the subject of country songs, the Statler Brothers once recorded a song which did mention the solution to all such trouble and heartache, entitled, "Jesus Is The Answer." One line in the song went, "Use the Bible for a rule-book and I'm sure you're gonna find, Jesus is the answer every

**time.** Before you shoot the jukebox, try Jesus and His Way. Read your Bible and learn of who Jesus is; what He has for you; see that **He is the answer every time!** Learn of His Great love and sacrifice (John 3:16; Romans 5:1-21). Learn of His Way to God (John 14:6; Acts 2:21-47; Romans 6:1-23). Learn of and respond to His great invitation to come to Him for "rest" and "forgiveness" (Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 8:1-39). What you hope to find in alcohol, drugs and other ways of the world, you will not find; but in Christ and His Word you will find all the answers (John 12:48-50; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

*No wonder life gets to be so dull with just a steady diet of what the world has to offer. Build up your faith, brighten up your living. Read a portion of the Word of God every day.*

## POSITIVELY NEGATIVE!

By Brett Johnson

Several months ago, a friend of mine was telling me about how a lady had come to him after services one day, severely criticizing him for preaching negative sermons. "If you have to be negative," she said, "be negative in a positive way!" Sometimes I wonder if all of us were born on the same planet. We really do need to put down our psychology, power thinking and positive living books, clear our minds of all the human wisdom with which we have filled them, and seriously study the pure word of God.

Jesus Christ didn't decide what to teach based on whether it was positive or negative. He taught the **truth**. If it was negative or positive, that was beside the point. We can see the evidence that He was the real master of the apostles and prophets, because they taught the same way. Take any book of the New Testament that you like, and with an open, honest, and objective mind, notice what percentage is positive and what is negative. You will find that **there is no pattern**. Some are mostly stern, even threatening; some are mostly edifying and affectionate. Some are an even blend of both. There is no pattern, except that the right thing was said at the right time, in the right way, to accomplish God's purpose.

The Lord said, in Luke 6:22-23,

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." Christ was also saying constantly to His closest disciples, "O, ye of little faith!" Also, the Lord was the one person responsible for making the word "pharisee" synonymous with "hypocrite" in Matthew 23. There were times that He just got plain grisly, as in Mark 9:43: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched." All of us could find multitudes of examples of these kinds of things from the teachings of Jesus, the apostles, and the prophets, if we are open enough to search for them.

Nowhere in the Bible do we see any teaching from God or man being judged as being good or bad because it was positive or negative. This aspect is ignored altogether. If we try to read this philosophy into the Scriptures, or if we even try to make our teaching a nice "balanced" blend of each, we are conforming the Bible to fit our pre-conceived ideas, instead of conforming our ideas to fit what the Bible says.

Although we are not inspired as Paul was, our manner of teaching should be as his in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. **Which things also we speak, NOT in the WORDS which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**" Why don't we do that!?

Another danger in this philosophy (besides being tempted to use our own approach to Bible topics rather than the Lord's) is that we start getting away from dealing with some Bible topics at all. In their effort to be positive, many preachers find themselves basically ignoring some of the most common subjects of the Bible, like eternal torment and persecution. Some even go so far as to question whether hell exists! Acts 20:26-27 states, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the**

**counsel of God.**" On Judgment Day, we must be able to say this. If we can't, the Lord may hold us guilty for the blood of men who never heard us declare the **whole counsel of God**.

In case you didn't recognize the awful irony of the situation with the "negative" preacher, think about the **total hypocrisy** (excuse me for being so negative) of a person **criticizing another person for being negative!**

2802 Woodland Hills East  
Columbia, SC 29210

*Don't put the Lord in the background here and expect Him to make a fuss over you in Heaven. The Savior that you deny here will be the Savior that you will meet in eternity.*

## REPENTANCE BEFORE FAITH?

By Burl Curtis

A doctrine that repentance comes before faith, held by many, needs re-examination.

"Repent" (Greek, *metanoeo*-to have another mind) and "repentance" (*metanoia*-a change of mind) are brought about by appreciating God's kindness which will create in the human heart godly sorrow. "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4, NKJV). "For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Cor. 7:10).

How can God's kindness lead you to repentance if you do not know about it or do not believe? True repentance, as taught in Scripture, results in action. Paul "declared...that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance" (Acts 26:20). If you truly "have another mind," you will do works suitable for repentance. How can these things be without faith? "But without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]" (Heb. 11:6).

Before the death and resurrection of Christ, it was entirely correct to speak of repenting and believing the gospel for the gospel of Christ had not been completed so believers could obey it. John the Baptist preached saying, "*The time*

(Continued on page 4)

is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15) Paul confirms this in Acts 19:4, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after, that is, on Christ Jesus." So there is a great difference between the baptism of John and baptism in the name of Jesus. But this future faith could not take the place of faith in God's message preached by John. Those who did not believe it did not repent. (See Mark 11:27-33).

The place of repentance is very clear in Acts 2. The devout believers in God were not told to repent and believe on some future Savior or gospel because these are no longer future. After hearing God's word preached, they believed God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ. Why were they cut to the heart and why did they ask, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED. Peter told them to "repent (in the name of Jesus Christ), and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" which they would not and could not have done if they did not believe. (vs. 36-38).

If repentance comes before faith, then Peter told them the wrong thing. He should have said, "Repent and believe," but he did not. When all that is involved in repentance (godly sorrow, change of mind, change of life), is weighed, then it is clear that repentance can only come after faith. Should it be any surprise that Peter was right?

118 Red Oak Lane  
Searcy AR 72143

*Genuine Christianity always makes its appearance in the form of great love and compassion for others.*

### SOME PENETRATING QUESTIONS

1. Is our desire for material things so great that we take jobs (and keep them) that make it impossible for us to fully serve and worship God?

2. Do we work so hard at secular employment that we say we are too tired to study the Bible, visit, and spread the Gospel?

3. Do we ever partake of the Lord's Supper on Sunday night knowing that

we could have been present that morning?

4. Do we place our Savior in the background when we go on vacation by never inquiring concerning places to worship?

5. Do we allow our children to attend dances and other places of iniquity? Do we place our stamp of approval on such sin?

6. Have we ever told the Lord that inclement weather made it impossible to attend - and then go to work on Monday in the same kind of weather?

7. Parents: Do you ever place the Master behind the children God gave to you? I am persuaded that widows and children get blamed far too often for the indolence that belongs to others.

8. Do we put God behind a worldly, unconverted view on Christianity? Is He buried beneath a sectarian outlook? Behind flimsy excuses we would not use at work or play?

9. Has it occurred to you that we are talking about things that are sinful and will keep you out of Heaven?

10. Do you ever deliberately miss a worship service?

Copied

*God sees the heart behind the hand and the motive behind the gift.*

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### GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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