Begotten*

Luke 1:21-35 (21) And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.
(22) And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.
(23) And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.
(24) And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,
(25) Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.
(26) And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,
(27) To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
(28) And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.
(29) And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.
(30) And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
(31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.
(32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
(33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.
(34) Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?
(35) And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall

overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.
The announcement by the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary, that she had been chosen as the mother of the coming Savior, contains the first mention in the New Testament of the Greek word for grace (charis). Mary was chosen, not for any meritorious works she had done, but because she had "found favor or grace" in the eyes of the Lord. In a remarkable parallel, certainly implying divine inspiration, the first mention of "grace" in the Old Testament is also associated with the coming of a new dispensation in God's dealings with men.
But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (Genesis 6:8).
Just as Noah found grace, so Mary had found grace. Grace is not something one earns by their own meritorious works or purchases; grace is a treasure that is found! When a person--whether Noah or Mary or you--finally realize that redemption is achievable only by the grace of God, and that in these last days is received by obedient faith to the gospel of Christ, one has made the greatest discovery that could ever be found, for it brings the Son into ones life. Turn with me to;
Hebrews 1:1-5 (1) God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
(2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
(3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
(4) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
(5) For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
In these last days God has not entrusted His saving grace to

any man, but hath revealed it unto us by His Son Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. God's only begotten Son hath spoken unto us the redemption promise he received from the Father. Why would one choose to neglect so great salvation spoken unto us by the Lord Jesus? And why would one neglect the Kingdom of the Lord that He purchased with His own blood? Most religions, both ancient and modern, require no historical basis, for they depend upon ideas of man rather than inspiration from God. Christianity is not one of man's ideas. The religion of Jesus Christ stands or falls upon the events of scripture and history. Did Jesus of Nazareth ever live? Are the New Testament data regarding Him and events during His life time reliable? Even though the New Testament proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus actually lived, it is by no means the only historical evidence available. Around the year A.D.94, a Jewish historian by the name of Josephus mentioned Jesus' name twice in his book, Antiquities of the Jews, section 18. About 20 years later, Tacitus, a Roman historian, wrote a book surveying the history of Rome. In it he described how Nero (the Roman emperor) "punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called)." He went on to write that "their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilates." Even though Tacitus, Josephus, and other historians from the first and second centuries A.D. were not followers of Christ, they did have something to say about Him—and they even verified that Jesus was a real person.

It can be concluded the Church is not a human institution, however it is composed of human beings, but is nevertheless a supernatural entity. Flowing down the stream of history, when the fullness of time had come, it turned the world upside down and inside out. No secular historian has ever explained the phenomenon of its emergence or the incredible impact its existence has had upon society. Unbelievers,

atheist and agnostics alike who have lived within the light and shadow of the two-thousand-year-old Church, cannot appreciate how revolutionary a force it has been. Baptized Believers on the other hand have been caught up in the gospel of Christ, placing their trust in a power that is so great that man cannot understand its workings, but its commands are ever clear. Scripture explains it this way in;

1Corinthians 1:18-21 (18) For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.
(19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.
(20) Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?
(21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

The gospel of Christ transcends failure, inadequacy, pride and compulsion. The life of the Church is usefulness, the Kingdom of Christ is a refuge for weary souls saved by the grace of God. The story of every Christian is the story of every man and woman purchased by the blood of Christ. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

To everyone who believes Jesus, to them he has given power to become sons of God. Are you a believer? If so, what are you doing with that power? Is the power laying dormant or do you plan to use it without delay? Becoming a son of God is not an option, it is an eternal decision on your part and a free gift of God on His part. Obedience to the gospel of Christ for remission of sin is your birthright to become a son of God. What will you do with it? Will you sell your birthright for worldly lust as Esau? Just before Christ ascended up to

heaven he established the ordinance of baptism. This ordinance is the fundamental basis of the gospel of Christ, for it contains the fundamental facts of salvation contained within the gospel. In the dipping of baptism one has part in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Therein the old man of sin is crucified and a new man is resurrected to walk in newness of life. This is the power given to men to become sons of God, even to them that believe in His word. And that word is this, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16). *What does baptism do?* Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (Romans 6:3). *Death means separation regardless of when or how the word is used. Christ died a sacrifice, but for His death to benefit a person, one must crucify the old man of sin. In order for this figurative death of a man to be benefited by the literal death of Christ, it is necessary for him to devolve into the death of Christ. Divine wisdom has decreed that such an experience is to be accomplished by and in baptism. Listen, you are;* Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (Col 2:12). *The final act of the spiritual circumcision is by baptism, and men are said to be buried with Christ. This phrase is used because in baptism the person is raised again, thus going down and up in the form of a burial and resurrection. It is said to be with Christ because He commands it, and also because He died and was buried in the tomb, from which He arose. Such a like burial and resurrection in the form of baptism is recognized as an act of faith in Christ and God. Faith in Christ is the effect of belief, and baptism is the effect of faith. So the point here given is baptism is a form of a burial and resurrection in Christ for remission of sin, and that those having put on that sin free robe will be added to the Church by the Lord. Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father and believers become sons of*

God by adoption when they put on Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3:27). *For those who believe and obey, they shall receive the blessings in Christ that flows from God the Father.* Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not (1John 3:1). *Herein is a most important truth*, "therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." *To know Christ is to believe in Him, and more importantly, that faith in Christ is the effect of belief. Jesus said*, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved", *how few believe it, therefore, how few have faith in Christ. And because of that unbelief in the word of Jesus the world knoweth us not, because it knoweth Him not. For one to say, I believe in Jesus but deny His word is rejection of Christ and cause for not being known of Him. Many will say, "Lord Lord". But Jesus will say unto them,* "depart from me, I never knew you." *But why would Jesus say this? Because they were never adopted, they refused the power to become sons of God. They neglected the salvation call of the only begotten Son of God;* How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; (Heb 2:3). *Turn with me to;*
Ephesians 1:3-5 (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
(4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
(5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
The theory that God has predestinated every human being to heaven or hell, regardless of ones own actions, does not take into full consideration the gracious character of the God revealed in the Bible, who desires salvation for every human

being; The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2Pet 3:9). *It is God's will that all should be predestinated to life,* For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). *Belief in and obedience to the gospel of Christ, is the determining cause of predestination unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. That is, as many as believe and are baptized are such as are being saved which the Lord adds to the Church. For this cause, while on earth Jesus established the ordinance of baptism for the purpose of salvation according to God's own will. Here is wisdom, God is all powerful and could have chosen any method of salvation. But having selected and announced the ordinance of baptism, one can disobey and be lost or obey and be saved. Faith in Christ is the effect of belief, and baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the effect of faith and is so specified;* For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3:26-27). *Who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus? Every born again believer is an adopted son of God, because they are...*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (Col 2:12).
Neglect baptism--is to neglect being risen with Christ.
Neglect of the faith of the operation of God--is faithlessness.
Neglect the Son--and one hath not the Father. Let's turn to;
1John 2:22-23 (22) Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.
(23) Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.
The present pluralistic climate that prevails in American

culture has disastrous implications. To suggest that all religions, all ideologies, all philosophies, and all beliefs are of equal validity, and ought to be tolerated as such, is to generate destabilization of a society that can end only in national suicide. Unless the Christian value system remains substantially intact in our society, we will lack the necessary morality to hold together. But even more tragic are the eternal implications for those who reject the truth regarding the only moral and spiritual entity, the Christian system.
Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).
Not only are we compassed about by Islam that reject the Christian system, there are others. For example, take the notion of reincarnation, a belief that permeates Hinduism, Buddhism, and the New Age philosophy, that characterizes the thinking of upwards of two billion people, lost in a false embrace of security. There is an unmistakable revelation in;
1Corinthians 15:1-4 (1) Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
(2) By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
(3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
(4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
This Jesus begotten of God, "hear ye him." While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in

whom I am well pleased; **hear ye him** (Matt 17:5). *Of interest is Moses was raised up in the splendor of Pharaoh's house, but descended to the status of his brothers whom he would lead out of Egypt. Jesus lived in the splendor of His Father's house, but descended to the status of the people whom He would lead out of sin.* This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear (Acts 7:37). *Jesus Christ is the only person to have received this endorsement. All other progenitor's of religion have not received this endorsement of God and are false. The whole gospel is first pronounced in words--then fully exhibited by faith in Christian immersion--in the Lord's day worship--and in the Lord's supper. We hear the gospel in words; we see it in ordinances and we exhibit it in works of faith by obedience to it. Our death to sin, our burial with Christ, our resurrection to a new life are shown in immersion. Our reconciliation to God, through the sacrifice of the Messiah, is set forth in the supper, and our joint interest and fellowship in Him as members of His body, appear in the participation of one loaf broken. The Lord's day not only commemorates the resurrection of Jesus, but anticipates the morning of the resurrection in which we shall enter into a rest which remains for the people of God. All this made possible by the only begotten Son of God. It is stated that;* God, who at sundry times and in divers manners **spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets**, **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:1-2). *This is the conclusion of the whole matter. In these latter days to whom should you entrust your soul? Moses? John the Baptist? Mohamed? Joseph Smith? Buddha? The time of the prophets like Moses and John the Baptist are past. Of all that remain only Jesus is real, the others are an illusion.* He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the

churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Rev 2:7). *His cross was stained with His blood, and when one by faith obeys the ordinance of baptism instituted by Christ, the old man of sin is crucified with Him and a new born is raised to walk in newness of life free from sin. The need for the tree of life blessing is the need for repentance and remission of past sins (Acts 2:38). Sin in the world linked with weakness in the flesh needs continual purging obtained by the blessings of the cross.*

But one must have faith (Heb 11:6). What faith? Faith in Christ that is the effect of belief in the word of God and in baptism that is the effect of that faith; So I ask you today, do you believe? Do you have faith? Have you by faith repented of your sins? Will you by faith confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God? If so, please come and confess Jesus Christ and be baptized into Him for remission of your sins. This is the gospel way of salvation. It's invitation is always open. Also prayer requests for other reasons, but not the popular 'sinners prayer for salvation' for it cannot take the place of; He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). *Please come while we gently persuade with song.*

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Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

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You Have Only One Shot by Dave Miller, Ph.D.

The present pluralistic climate that prevails in American culture has disastrous implications. To suggest that all religions, all ideologies, all philosophies, and all beliefs are of equal validity, and ought to be tolerated as such, is to generate social anarchy and the destabilization of society that can end only in national suicide. Unless a single value system remains substantially intact in any given civilization, that society will lack the necessary "glue" to hold together. But even more tragic are the eternal implications for those who reject the truth regarding the only moral and spiritual reality, i.e., the Christian system.

For example, take the notion of reincarnation, a belief that permeates Hinduism, Buddhism, and New Age philosophy, and thus characterizes the thinking of upwards of two billion people (for brief discussions of reincarnation, see Valea, 2006; "Recarnation," 2007). Here is a sinister doctrine that robs those masses of their one and only opportunity to prepare for afterlife. Reincarnation is the idea that at death, all human souls (according to some, animals as well) simply "recycle" into another body on Earth, and that this rebirth process is repeated over and over again until the individual eventually reaches the ultimate spiritual condition—nirvana and enlightenment.

Such a viewpoint inevitably must bring a sense of false comfort to the individual who embraces it. He or she naturally is not overly concerned with moral behavior and life choices. After all, multiple opportunities to live life over again are forthcoming. Herein lays the tragedy. The fact of the matter is that a human being has but "one shot" at life (Miller, 2003). Every person lives but one life on Earth and then must face death and Judgment (Hebrews 9:27). At death, a person's spirit enters the Hadean realm to await the final Judgment and is unable to return to Earth (read Luke 16:19-31; cf. Miller, 2005). Consequently, it is absolutely imperative for every human being to examine God's Word (the Bible) to ascertain how life is to be lived in view of eternity (cf. Butt, 2003). Millions of people literally are squandering their one and only opportunity to prepare themselves to secure everlasting happiness, and so will be consigned instead to everlasting torment (Matthew 25:31-46). Any doctrine that softens a person's will to be conscientious regarding morality and behavior is a sinister doctrine that ought to be exposed and repudiated (Ephesians 5:11; 1 John 4:1).

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Can We Prove Jesus Was a Real Person? by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

You may find this surprising, but there are many people in the world today who actually think that Jesus is nothing more than a fantasy figure that various secret societies created 2,000 years ago. Allegedly, His name belongs in the same fictional writings that contain such fairy-tale characters as Peter Pan, Hercules, and Snow White and the seven dwarfs. Gerald Massey, in his book, Gnostic and Historic Christianity, has "informed" us that "[w]hether considered as the God made human, or as man made divine, this character [Jesus—EL] never existed as a person" (1985, p. 22). Skeptics like Massey, Acharya (1999), and others believe that Christians have been deceived into thinking that there really was a man named Jesus, when, in fact, He never lived.

How do those of us who believe in the historicity of Jesus Christ respond to such allegations? Can we really know that there was a sinless, miracle-working, death-defying man named Jesus who lived upon the Earth approximately 2,000 years ago, or have we accepted His existence blindly?

Even though the New Testament proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus actually lived, it is by no means the only historical evidence available. Around the year A.D. 94, a Jewish historian by the name of Josephus mentioned Jesus' name twice in his book, Antiquities of the Jews. In section 18 of that work, Josephus wrote: "And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a man; for he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure" (emp. added). Then, in section 20, Josephus documented how a man named Ananus brought before the Sanhedrin "a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others" (emp. added).

About 20 years later, Tacitus, a Roman historian, wrote a book surveying the history of Rome. In it he described how Nero (the Roman emperor) "punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called)." He went on to write that "their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilatus" (Annals 15:44, emp. added). Even though Tacitus, Josephus, and other historians from the first and second centuries A.D. were not followers of Christ, they did have something to say about Him—and they even verified that Jesus was a real person Who was so famous that He even attracted the attention of the Roman emperor himself!

Another obvious reason to believe that Jesus was a real person is because our entire dating method is based upon His existence. The letters "B.C." stand for "before Christ," and the letters "A.D." (standing for Anno Domini) mean "in the year of the Lord." So when a history teacher speaks of Alexander the Great ruling much of the world in 330 B.C., he or she is admitting that Alexander lived about 330 years before Jesus was born.

Even though this is only a sampling of the evidence relating to the man known as Jesus, it is enough to prove that He was a real person, and not just some imaginary character. We do not accept His existence blindly—it is a historical fact!

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