

PROPIITIATION
HEIR OF ALL THINGS
TEACHER
OUR PASSEOVER LAMB
BRONZE SNAKE
FRIEND OF TAX COLLECTORS
GREAT HIGH PRIEST
MIGHTY GOD
CORNERSTONE
COMFORTER OF ISRAEL
FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD
LIVING STONE
LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH
DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS
PRINCE OF PEACE
MAN OF SORROWS
FRAGRANT OFFERING
AMEN
JUDGE
FOUNTAIN
SERVANT
REDEEMER
APOSTLE
CARPENTER'S SON
CHIEF SHEPHERD
WORD OF GOD

Lord of Glory

A Lenten Devotional on the Names of Christ
BY RAY PRITCHARD

RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR
WAY
ALPHA AND OMEGA
SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS
MORNING STAR
ARK OF SALVATION
FAITHFUL WITNESS
PROPHET
AUTHOR OF SALVATION
CREATOR OF ALL THINGS
REJECTED STONE
THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

*Lord
of
Glory*

A Lenten Devotional on the Names of Christ
BY RAY PRITCHARD

This Lenten devotional is produced by
Keep Believing Ministries.

You can find us on the Internet at
www.KeepBelieving.com.

Questions or Comments?
We love getting your feedback.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/raypritchard>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/raypritchard>
Email: ray@keepbelieving.com

Published by Primedia eLaunch
www.primediaelaunch.com

Contents

What's in a Name?	7
March 5: Seed of the Woman	9
March 6: Alpha and Omega	11
March 7: Chief Shepherd	13
March 8: Wonderful Counselor	15
March 9: Mighty God	17
March 10: Everlasting Father	19
March 11: Prince of Peace	21
March 12: Balm of Gilead	23
March 13: Servant	25
March 14: Great High Priest	27
March 15: Faithful Witness	29
March 16: Firstborn from the Dead	31
March 17: Ruler of the Kings of the Earth	33
March 18: Author of Salvation	35
March 19: Teacher	37
March 20: Prophet	39
March 21: Judge	41
March 22: Lion of the Tribe of Judah	43
March 23: Bronze Snake	45
March 24: Ark of Salvation	47
March 25: Word of God	49
March 26: Lord of Glory	51
March 27: Friend of Sinners	53
March 28: Morning Star	55
March 29: Amen	57
March 30: Carpenter's Son	59
March 31: Consolation of Israel	63
April 1: Heir of All Things	65
April 2: Creator of All Things	67

April 3: Sustainer of All Things	69
April 4: Redeemer	71
April 5: Propitiation	73
April 6: Way	75
April 7: Desire of All Nations	77
April 8: Rejected Stone	79
April 9: Living Stone	81
April 10: Cornerstone	83
April 11: Friend of Tax Collectors	85
April 12: Apostle	87
April 13: Fragrant Offering	89
April 14: Our Passover Lamb	91
April 15: Fountain	93
April 16: Mediator	97
April 17: Man of Sorrows	99
April 18: The One They Have Pierced	103
April 19: A Dead Man Named Jesus	105
April 20: The Resurrection and the Life	109
Thank You	111

What's in a Name?

One of the many important decisions confronting new parents is, "What shall we call our baby?" Most new parents spend hours debating this question. We all realize that names matter. Shall the new baby be named after his father, his uncle, a favorite friend? Should he be given a name that happens to be popular at the moment? Or one that simply sounds good?

Names are important because you tend to become what your name represents. Occasionally you'll run across a person with multiple names, such as Charles Phillip Arthur George. That sounds odd until you discover it's Prince Charles, the next in line to the throne of the United Kingdom and heir apparent to his mother, Queen Elizabeth. If four names seem like a lot, remember he's royalty and he needs a long name.

So it is with Jesus.

The Bible contains many names of Christ. I found one website that lists 100 names, another with 150, and still another 200 names of Christ. Each one unlocks an aspect of his character. They teach who he is and how he can help us today. In this Lenten devotional series we'll be looking at some of the names, titles and descriptions of Christ as we walk with Jesus toward the cross and the empty tomb.

His names tell us who he is.

His names tell us why he came.

His names tell us how he can help us.

His names tell us why we worship him.

The term Lent refers to a season of preparation covering the six

Lord of Glory: What's in a Name?

weeks leading up to Easter. In most traditions, it begins on Ash Wednesday and continues through Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. This year Lent begins on March 5.

In the evangelical wing of the church, we're never sure what to do about Lent. Often we have ignored it. But there always something to be said for preparing our hearts for big events. And Easter is the ultimate Big Event.

So this year we will focus on the names of Christ, taking a different one each day beginning on March 5 and ending on April 20, Easter Sunday.

Writing in 1866, William Dowling said this about the names of Christ:

“By contemplating these Sacred and suggestive titles believers in Jesus may hope to increase their faith, purify their love, and learn more of the Great Master's holy will.”

May that be your experience during this Lenten season.

March 5

Seed of the Woman

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed” (Genesis 3:15).

This is the first promise given after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. It is also the first promise of redemption in the Bible. *Everything else in the Bible flows from Genesis 3:15.* As the acorn contains the mighty oak, so these words contain the entire plan of salvation. The great English preacher Charles Simeon called this verse “the sum and summary of the whole Bible.”

Although you may not see it at first glance, Christ is in this verse. He is the ultimate Seed of the Woman who would one day come to crush the serpent’s ugly head. In the process his “heel” would be bruised on the cross. In short, this verse predicts that Jesus would win the victory over Satan but would himself be wounded at the same time.

As the centuries rolled on, Satan kept winning victories and God kept raising up men and women who would continue the godly line on the earth. *I like to think of this verse as the top of a wide funnel.* When the promise was given, no one could have imagined the coming of Jesus Christ. The “seed of the woman” simply meant that he must be a member of the human race. But after the flood the line was narrowed to Noah’s descendants, then later to Shem’s descendants, and later came to rest on one man—Abraham, the father of the nation Israel. Then to his son Isaac, to Isaac’s son Jacob, and then to Jacob’s son Judah. Centuries

later the line was narrowed to the house of David. Finally the line came to rest on the firstborn son of a virgin named Mary. *What started with the whole human race has narrowed to just one man—Jesus Christ.*

Genesis 3:15 would ultimately be fulfilled at a place called Golgotha outside the city walls of Jerusalem. But all of that was in the future when God first spoke these words. Neither Adam nor Eve could fully have known what these words would one day mean.

When Charles Wesley wrote the familiar carol *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*, he included a verse based on Genesis 3:15. Modern hymnals often omit this verse, which is unfortunate since it contains excellent theology:

Come, Desire of Nations, come, Fix in us Thy humble
home.

*Rise the woman's conquering Seed, Bruise in us the serpent's
head.*

Adam's likeness now efface, Stamp Thine image in its place,
Second Adam from above, Reinstate us in Thy love,
Hark, the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.

As we begin our Lenten journey, let's remember that Christ came in fulfillment of a promise made amid the wreckage caused by Adam's sin. Through his great sacrifice we have been set free.



Lord Jesus, with your own blood you kept the promise the Father made. Glory to you, our Savior and King. Amen.

March 6

Alpha and Omega

“I am the Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 22:13).

Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet.
Omega is the last letter.

To say Jesus is the Alpha means he is the beginning of all things.
He always was.

To say Jesus is the Omega means he is the end of all things.
He always will be.

The first and the last stand for everything in between.
Think of the 26 letters of the English alphabet.
You can spell any word you like if you know all 26 letters.

Take the words of Shakespeare,
Add the words of Hemingway and Faulkner,
Throw in the words of Orwell, Byron, and Chaucer.

As magnificent as they are, they are all bound by those 26 letters.
They could not go beyond the alphabet itself.

Our Lord contains within himself all truth.
He is the complete truth.
He is the final truth.

He stands before all things,
And all things find their purpose in him.

Lord of Glory: Alpha and Omega

Jesus is the first and the last.
In him all things have their beginning.
His glory will be their end.

He is the All-Inclusive Lord.
He always was, always is, and always will be.

Before time and throughout eternity, he is Lord.
He is the great I AM.

All that we need, we find in him.

It is said that the early Christians, facing persecution and death,
Engraved on their tombs the Greek symbols for Alpha and Omega.

He is all we need in this life.
He is all we need in the moment of death.
He is all we need for eternity.



Lord of all things, you are the beginning and the end. You are Lord
of all our tomorrows. Uphold us by your mighty hand. Amen.

March 7

Chief Shepherd

“When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away” (1 Peter 5:4).

Do you feel forgotten?
Here is a title just for you.

Two thousand years ago the winner of an athletic event received a victor's crown made of leaves or flowers. Sometimes it would be withered parsley, sometimes myrtle, sometimes roses or oak leaves. But the leaves and flowers would soon fade, and the triumph would be forgotten. So it is with all things earthly. The Winter Olympics games have come and gone, and we've mostly forgotten who won the medals.

Spiritual leaders are often unappreciated in this life. A recent poll shows that American trust in clergy members is lower than ever. Even in the church we often overlook those who labor for Christ. But when Jesus returns, those who have served Christ faithfully will be vindicated openly. The crown they receive will last forever, and their labors on earth will never be forgotten. The slightest deed done in Jesus' name in the remotest corner of the earth will be remembered because God writes it down in his book. He sees it all, not just the glamour, but the work of faith, the labor of love, and the patience of hope. Not even a cup of water offered in his name goes unnoticed. It's all written down awaiting the final reward.

The Chief Shepherd watches over his flock.

Lord of Glory: Chief Shepherd

He knows his sheep and never lets them out of his sight.
He protects them and leads them through the darkest valleys.

He knows those who labor for him.
They may feel forgotten, but he sees them.

Do you feel like no one notices what you are doing?
Keep going, keep believing, keep serving, keep giving.
The Chief Shepherd has his eyes on you.



O Lord, you remember what others forget. Help us to serve you
gladly today, knowing that nothing done in Jesus' name is ever
done in vain. Amen.

March 8

Wonderful Counselor

“He will be called Wonderful Counselor” (Isaiah 9:6).

Are you confused?

Do you need God’s direction?

We all feel that way from time to time. Isaiah 9:6 gives us four names of Christ that describe four aspects of his divine character. The first one speaks to our need for God’s guidance.

Literally this title means “a wonder of a counselor,” speaking of the wisdom of his plan. The word “wonderful” means “astonishing” or “extraordinary.” The writers of the Old Testament used it for acts of God which man cannot understand. The word “counselor” means “advisor” or “ideal ruler.”

This means he is a reliable counselor. Those who come to him will never be led astray. Radio and television are filled with people who make their living giving advice to others. Much of it is good, some not so good. But the Lord goes to no one for advice. And when anyone comes to him, he gives them the counsel they need.

He is therefore the perfect teacher and the ultimate counselor. This gives us insight into how he works. His plans are not our plans, his ways not our ways. He will accomplish things beyond human comprehension, and he will do it in ways we cannot fathom. He will do the greatest work ever accomplished, and he will do it successfully. A violent death would not be man’s way to victory, but it was God’s plan and our Lord carried it out perfectly.

Lord of Glory: Wonderful Counselor

As the Wonderful Counselor, he gives wholesome direction to His people. Those who follow him will not walk in darkness but in the blazing light of day.

What help do you need today?
What guidance do you seek?

Trust the one whose name is Wonderful Counselor.



Lord Jesus, all the treasures of divine wisdom are found in you. You know what I need for today and tomorrow. Grant me a holy desire to do your will. Amen.

March 9

Mighty God

“He will be called . . . Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6).

Who is Jesus Christ?

Is he just a man or is he “more than a carpenter”?

This name speaks of the “power of accomplishment.” It is first of all a statement of deity. The baby born in the manger is not just the Son of God, he is also God the Son. All the fullness of God dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ. As the ancient creeds declare, he is “very God of very God.” That can never be said of any mere human baby.

There is something else important in this title. The word translated “mighty” means “strong one” or “powerful, valiant warrior.” Thus the term “mighty God” is actually a military title.

Because he is mighty, he fights for his people.

Because he is God, he never loses a battle.

At the Incarnation, God took the form of human flesh. That’s why one of his names is Immanuel—God with us.

Now take the first two titles together and what do you have?

As the Wonderful Counselor — He makes the plans.

As the Mighty God —He makes the plans work.

All of his wonderful plans will be carried out with all of God’s infinite might. There is in this little baby all the strength of Deity.

Lord of Glory: Mighty God

The power of God is in those tiny fists. His commands rest upon the omnipotence of God. Whatever he desires, he is able to achieve.

When we meet Jesus, we meet God. If he is not the “mighty God,” then we are deceived and it is blasphemy to worship him. There is no middle ground.

If he is not God, we are fools to worship him.

If he is God, we are fools not to.

But if he is the Mighty God, then when we rely on him, we are relying on God himself! We need divine aid to help us in our battle.

Be of good cheer. Jesus is the Mighty God who has defeated all our foes.



My Lord, you have fought and won every battle. You are the undisputed Victor. When I am tempted to doubt, remind me of your unlimited power. Amen.

March 10

Everlasting Father

“He will be called . . . Everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6).

Does Jesus care for me?

Can I depend on him to the very end?

In the Hebrew the phrase is literally “the father of eternity.” This speaks of the purpose of his coming. It means that his power is not limited by time and space. Because he is the “father of eternity,” you will never see a “Going Out of Business” sign at the gate of heaven. His power is eternal and his resources are infinite.

He is the perpetual guardian and friend to his people. When you come to him, he is always there, always ready to help in the time of need. When we considering the universe and all its diverse parts, he is the “everlasting father” because he created it:

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him” (Colossians 1:16).

He is eternally like a father to his people. All that a good father is, Jesus is to his people.

What he was, he is.

What he is, he will be.

What he will be, he always was.

Lord of Glory: Everlasting Father

Because he is like a father, he cares for his people. Because he owns eternity, he can give us eternal life. That's important for those who live on this sin-cursed planet. No one lives forever. Sooner or later we will all find our own place in the graveyard. As Thomas Gray remarked, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave." We're here today, gone tomorrow.

A dead Christ will do us no good. Dying men need an undying Christ. Writing in 1787, Ambrose Serle showed in quaint language what this title should mean to us:

Let this encourage thee, therefore, fearful Christian, to venture, with faithful Boldness, upon thy redeeming God. Come, like a simple helpless Child, to Him, thy gracious, thy tender, thy everlasting Father, Speak out all thy Complaints . . . Lift them again and again. Thy Lord will never send thee empty away" (*Names and Titles of Jesus Christ*, P. 115).

Here's a key phrase: He is a father forever! That's important to me because I had a father, but not a father forever. I had a father, but he is gone now. I received a message from someone who said her aunt knew my father, Dr. Tyrus Pritchard. That warmed my heart because it's been 40 years since my father died. He was a very good man, but he was not a father forever. I am a father to my three sons, but I am not a father forever. I will someday pass away. All human fathers must go. But Jesus is a father forever. He's just what we need.



I am glad, O Lord, that your mercy endures forever. I rejoice in the thought that you care for me and that you are greater than any problem I may face today. Amen.

March 11

Prince of Peace

“He will be called . . . Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Will there ever be peace on earth?
Most days the answer seems to be no.
But this name brings good news with it.

The phrase literally means “the prince whose coming brings peace.” It is the climax of all that has gone before. The word “prince” means something like “General of the Army.” It speaks of his high position. The word “peace” speaks of his basic nature.

All over the globe there are ethnic conflicts and tribal wars. As I write these words there is turmoil in Syria, Egypt, Iran, Yemen, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Chechnya, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Libya, the India-China border, the Republic of Georgia, Dagestan, and in the East China Sea.

We’re almost immune to violence because we live in a violent world.

Isaiah 9:6 tells us that God’s plan for world peace focuses on a baby asleep in a manger in Bethlehem. He is the ultimate Prince of Peace.

- In the past, his coming made peace with God.
- In the present, those who trust in him find peace in their hearts when Christ comes in.
- In the future, his second coming will usher in a kingdom of peace.

Lord of Glory: Prince of Peace

We live in a world marked by strife and bloodshed. He is not a failure. We are.

God's ultimate plan for peace rests not in treaties or education or material prosperity. God's plan for peace is the Maker of Peace, Jesus Christ.

To know him is to know blessing and happiness. To live without him means a life that is restless and miserable.

He came to bring peace.
He did. He does. He will.

Will you do what makes for peace? Is there someone you need to be make peace with? You can do it because Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace.



Lord Jesus, you came to bring peace to a world torn by sin and suffering. Make me an instrument of your peace today. Amen.

March 12

Balm of Gilead

“Is there no balm in Gilead?” (Jeremiah 8:22).

In three different places the Old Testament mentions the “balm” or healing ointment that comes from Gilead, the mountainous region east of the Jordan River. When Joseph’s brothers conspired against him in Genesis 37, they sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelites from the region of Gilead carrying a load of gum, balm, and myrrh (v. 25). Jeremiah 46:11 mentions the healing balm of Gilead. Jeremiah 8:22 poses a question to the sinning people of Judah:

Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there?

A well-known African-American spiritual applies the words of the text this way:

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin sick soul.

Jesus is truly the “balm of Gilead” for all the hurting people of the world. When J. C. Philpot preached on Jeremiah 8:22 in 1852, he pointed out that God’s grace is always greater than our sin:

There is more in the balm to heal than there is in guilt to wound; for there is more in grace to save than there is in sin to destroy.

Lord of Glory: Balm of Gilead

If we know Jesus, we're going to heaven because his grace is far greater than our sin. His blood is the balm that heals the deepest wounds of sin. When we have fallen hard, he lifts us up and restores our soul.

Is there no Balm in Gilead? Yes, there is. Jesus is the name that makes the wounded whole.



Blessed Lord, you specialize in healing the broken places of life. Speak your healing word today and we will be made whole. Amen.

March 13

Servant

“I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27).

Ambition has become something of a dirty word in our day. To many people it implies an overwhelming desire for personal advancement regardless of the cost and regardless of who is hurt in the process. There is entirely too much of that kind of ambition in the business world. In every company or office you can almost always find a few people who are willing to play fast and loose with the truth if it will help them climb the corporate ladder. They cut corners, they lie on their expense reports, they spread malicious gossip, they abuse their authority, and they know how to stab you in the back and walk away laughing. In the truest sense of the phrase, they are looking out for number one.

Jesus knew all about men and women like that. And he understood that his followers would be tempted to use the same tactics. With four simple words he radically broke with that kind of ambition: “*Not so with you*” (Luke 22:26). Then he painted an entirely different picture of ambition. “Do you want to be a leader? That’s great because the world needs good leaders. Here’s what I want you to do. Become a servant. Pick up a towel and start washing dirty feet. Think of yourself as a slave and not as a master.”

No doubt the disciples recoiled at the thought of taking the menial role of a servant. After all, these were the geniuses who had just been arguing about who was going to have the seat of honor at the big banquet in the Kingdom. The whole point of picking the seat

Lord of Glory: Servant

of honor is to have someone else serve you.

“Not so with you.” With those four words Jesus turned the values of the world upside down and established a new fraternity—the Royal Order of Servants. Want to join?

Who is the most Christlike person you know? He (or she) is probably busy washing dirty feet because that’s what servants do. Want to be like Jesus today? Find a towel and basin and get started.



Lord Jesus, you came not to serve but to serve others. When I see ways to serve, help me to do it, no matter how costly or how inconvenient. Grant that I might have your servant’s heart today. Amen.

March 14

Great High Priest

“We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God” (Hebrews 4:14).

We all need a friend in high places.
If you know Jesus, you’ve got one!

Most of us are at a disadvantage when we read this verse because we don’t have a clear notion of what a high priest is. In the Old Testament the high priest was the spiritual leader of the nation of Israel. There were various levels and orders of priests in Judaism, but there was only one high priest. On the Day of Atonement he would go behind the thick veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. There he would offer the blood of a goat on the golden Mercy Seat that sat atop the Ark of the Covenant. When the blood was offered in the way God prescribed, the sins of the people were atoned or covered for another year (see Leviticus 16).

That system was never meant to last forever. The high priest had to repeat the sacrifice year after year. When one high priest died, he was replaced by another who continued the yearly sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. Now that Christ has come, the sacrificial system of the Old Testament has been abolished. Christ has become our great high priest who has passed through the heavens into the sanctuary of God. Christ’s sacrifice never needs to be repeated because through his death on the cross, he made a complete and final atonement for our sins.

Lord of Glory: Great High Priest

He is the right person to hear our prayers because he has entered the Holy of Holies in heaven. He is Jesus (his human name) and he is also the Son of God (his divine title). Though he is not visible to us today, the same Jesus who once walked on the earth is now in heaven, having opened the way to God by his own eternal sacrifice.

Because Jesus knows how sinful we really are, we don't have to play games when we pray. We can come to God just the way we are, clinging only to the cross and claiming nothing but the blood of Jesus as our only hope.

Because Jesus is our great high priest, we've got a friend in high places. We've got a friend at the throne of grace who delights to answer our prayers. Come boldly. Come often. Come to the throne of grace and pour out your heart to God. You will not be turned away.



We praise you, Lord Jesus, that you are able to help us in our time of need. Help us to pray boldly because we are praying in your name, Amen.

March 15

Faithful Witness

“Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness”
(Revelation 1:5).

The men and women of this generation have heard the name of Jesus many times. What they want to know is very simple: “Can I trust him?” In a world of religious charlatans, this is where we must begin. This verse calls Jesus “the faithful witness.” A witness tells what he has seen or heard. A faithful witness is one whose testimony is reliable every time.

John means that Jesus Christ can be relied upon to tell the truth. When he speaks, he speaks only the truth. His words are absolutely true and authoritative. 1 Timothy 6:13 speaks of “*Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate, made the good confession.*” What did he say when he stood before Pilate? “*I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me*” (John 18:37). Jesus Christ is the supreme truth-teller, and those who want to find the truth must listen to him.

I love this statement by John Watson:

“No one has yet discovered the word Jesus ought to have said, none suggested the better word he might have said. No action of his has shocked our moral sense. None has fallen short of the ideal. He is full of surprises, but they are all the surprises of perfection.”

Every person has to deal with this fundamental issue about Jesus—

Lord of Glory: Faithful Witness

Can I trust him? Some people will answer yes, others will say no. Until this issue is settled, there is no point in talking about anything else.

Let's suppose you don't want to take my word for it. Read the record for yourself. Take 30 days to read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the Testament. Read the story for yourself and come to your own conclusions. Let me tell you what I believe will happen. If you read with an open mind and an open heart, you will come to the conclusion that what Jesus said is true, that he is the truth, and that his word can be eternally trusted.

I am not saying anything to try to prove it to you. I simply challenge you to read it for yourself. Make up your own mind. When you do, you will find that he is entirely trustworthy.



Lord Jesus, you are the truth and you bear witness to the truth. May I be a faithful witness for you in the eyes of the watching world. Amen.

March 16

Firstborn from the Dead

“Jesus Christ, who is . . . the firstborn from the dead”
(Revelation 1:5).

When Jesus rose from the dead, he was the “firstborn from the dead.” That *means he is the first person who ever rose from the dead never to die again*. During his ministry Jesus raised several people from the dead, including Lazarus who had been dead four days (John 11). Each occasion was a remarkable miracle, but all the people Jesus raised would eventually die again.

But not Jesus himself.

When he came forth from the tomb on Easter Sunday morning, he rose once and for all. When he left the grave, he left for good. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead in the sense that he is the first in a long line of people who will be raised from the dead never to die again.

I find great comfort in this. Over the years I have presided at many funerals. I know what it’s like to stand at the graveside and try to say something hopeful in the calloused face of death. It’s not easy to pray when someone you love has been taken from you. No wonder the Bible calls death “*the last enemy*” (1 Corinthians 15:26).

In those moments I find strength in one thing and one thing only. *Jesus has conquered the grave and done what no mortal man has ever done*. He has come back from the dead never to die again. What happens to those who believe in him? Thank God, we are not left

to wonder or to speculate. God himself has spoken on that subject. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 (NASB) says, *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”*

“If we believe.” It is as simple and as difficult as that. You will never convince yourself of the resurrection by camping out in a cemetery. If you go to a cemetery and wait for a resurrection, you’ll have to wait a long time. After all, the last one happened over 2,000 years ago. But we have the word of God that overrides anything we can see with our eyes. Our faith in the resurrection of the dead does not rest in what our eyes can see. *Our faith rests on the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead.* If God can do that, he can do anything.



My Lord, when I am tempted to doubt your promises, remind me that you rose from the dead just as you said. Thank you that my future is secure because you are the first but not the last to rise from the dead. Amen.

March 17

Ruler of the Kings of the Earth

“Jesus Christ, who is . . . the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5).

The word for “ruler” means he is the ultimate authority over all the kings of the earth. They are great, but he is greater. They are mighty, but he is mightier. *Millions answer to them, but they answer to him.* He is not merely one of the kings. He rules over them all.

In the first century the mighty emperor Nero thought he was the ruler of the kings of the earth. He held in his hands the power of life and death. Thumbs up: one man lived. Thumbs down: one man died. It is said that he ordered the burning of Rome and then blamed it on the early Christians. He had Paul the apostle beheaded, thinking that the pernicious Christian movement would die with him. But now 2000 years have passed, and the tables have turned. We name our dogs Nero and our sons Paul.

Who are the kings of the earth John is talking about? They are political leaders in their various spheres—mayors and council members, governors, congressmen and senators, presidents and prime ministers, and potentates of every variety. There are small-time kings who rule tiny realms and mighty kings who rule vast empires.

Their names are Obama, Putin, Netanyahu, Ahmadinejad,

Lord of Glory: Ruler of the Kings of the Earth

Komorowski, Mukherjee, Harper, Kim, Abdullah, Sarkozy, Karzai, Xi, Mugabe, Remengesau, Calderon, Merkel, Cartes and Cameron. And a thousand others just like them.

Jesus rules over them all. We all know that the world is in a mess. That's why it's hard to believe this is true. *All the evidence seems to move in the opposite direction.* The pornographers go free, the baby-killers are untouched, the politicians break the laws they write, the drug dealers make their millions, and the nations arm themselves for total destruction. Without trying very hard, you could make a good case that Satan is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

But it only seems that way. Satan has no power except that granted to him by God. *In due time and at the proper moment, Jesus will step back on the stage of world history.* Think of it. The hands that were nailed to the cross will someday rule the world. Though we do not see it today, it is certain and sure of fulfillment. That's what the book of Revelation is all about. Read it for yourself and see how the story ends.

In the meantime, right now and at this very moment, he is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

By him they reign.
By him they are restrained.
By him they are replaced.
By him they will be judged.

Will Jesus take care of my future? Yes he will, for he is the ruler of the kings of the earth. You're in good hands when you are in his hands for those hands rule the universe.



In these days when the world seems to shake beneath us, I rest my faith on you, Lord Jesus, ruler of the kings of the earth. Amen.

March 18

Author of Salvation

“It was fitting that God . . . should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering”
(Hebrews 2:10).

The whole earthly life of Jesus is summed up in one phrase. He was made “perfect through suffering.” But wasn’t Jesus perfect when he was born in the manger? And didn’t he live a sinless life? Wasn’t his death the death of an innocent man? Yes. He was morally perfect. That is one kind of perfection or completion.

But there is another kind of perfection or completion that comes only by experience. Jesus entered fully into the sufferings of this world and emerged victorious over them. He was completed in his experience on the earth by the things he suffered. That is why he may be called the “author” of our salvation.

Christ came to blaze the trail so we might follow him on to glory. *But the trail is marked with suffering, with tears, with rejection, and it ultimately leads to the cross.* Anyone who follows Jesus will end up where he ended up—outside Jerusalem on a hill shaped like a skull. He is not just leading us to heaven. He is leading us to glory. There is glory at the end of the Christian life. Jesus came from heaven so we might follow him in suffering and like him be made complete through suffering.

That explains so much that happens to us. What is God doing in your life and in mine? He is putting us through the Curriculum

Lord of Glory: Author of Salvation

of Grace in the School of Suffering. School starts the moment we trust Christ and ends the day we die. How will we ever pass the test and win the degree? By keeping our eyes on Jesus. He's the valedictorian of the class. He never failed a test. He blazed the trail through the School of Suffering that we might follow in his path. He is leading us to glory one step at a time.

How are you suffering today? Do you feel persecuted? Misunderstood? Are you battling a health situation? Has your family turned on you because of your faith? If so, remember that your suffering is part of Christ's plan to complete his work in you.



Lord Jesus, we bow before you today. We gladly confess you as the Author of our salvation. Complete your work in us no matter what it takes. We look forward to the day when we will be with you in glory. Amen.

March 19

Teacher

“Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go”
(Matthew 8:19).

They called him Teacher.

Of the 90 times Jesus was addressed directly in the gospels, 60 times he was called Teacher. This was the word the multitudes used. This was how the disciples referred to him. Jesus himself used the term when he said, “You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am” (John 13:13). When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, he said, “*We know that you are a teacher who has come from God*” (John 3:2).

History has echoed the truth of that verdict. Scottish theologian James Stuart said, “The teaching of Jesus has had a power and an effect with which the influence of no other teacher can even for a moment be compared.” When Jesus had finished giving the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew tells us the crowds were so amazed at his teaching because “*he taught as one having authority, and not as their teachers of the law*” (Matthew 7:29). The rabbis quoted each other, but Jesus spoke the true and authoritative words of God.

He never entered a classroom as we know a classroom. He never had a degree as we understand an educational degree, yet all the world was his classroom. No degreed teacher did anything greater than what Jesus Christ did. He was truly and absolutely the Master Teacher and the greatest teacher of all time.

Lord of Glory: Teacher

Consider his final words, his last instructions, his ultimate command as given to us in the King James Version: “*Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:19 KJV). His final command was a teaching command.

How well did it work? Look around you. Two thousand years have passed and today across the world over two billion people bear his name. Christianity has spread from Jerusalem to every corner of the globe. At this very moment multiplied thousands of missionaries are doing what Jesus said to do: teaching all nations. If the success of the students is the measure of the teacher, then no teacher was ever so successful as the one and only Master Teacher, Jesus Christ.

Who are you teaching? In what ways can you become more intentional in passing along what the Lord Jesus has taught you?



Lord Jesus, help us to teach others by our words and deeds. May the Spirit of Christ fill us so that whoever follows us will become more like you. Amen.

March 20

Prophet

“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers” (Deuteronomy 18:18).

In Deuteronomy 18 God promises through Moses to raise a line of godly prophets in Israel. That line would culminate in one person who would be the “prophet like me” of verse 15: “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.” Verse 18 gives us the same promise in the Lord’s own words: “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.”

This “prophet like you” will have four characteristics:

1. He is raised up by God (meaning that he has a divine calling).
2. He will be like Moses (thus having intimate knowledge of God).
3. He will be from among the people (an Israelite).
4. He will speak with divine authority (as a result of the preceding factors).

Who could this prophet be?

In Acts 3 Peter heals a crippled man in the name of Jesus. When a crowd gathers in amazement to watch the formerly-crippled man walk under his own power, Peter preaches a powerful evangelistic sermon. He tells them that this miracle had been done by the power

Lord of Glory: Prophet

of Jesus—the same man who had been crucified just a few weeks earlier. As part of his proof that Jesus is the promised Messiah, Peter quotes Deuteronomy 18:15 and applies it directly to Jesus (Acts 3:22).

Because Jesus is the True Prophet of God, he understands the secrets of the human heart. Nothing is hidden from him. Though men cover their sin with a thin veneer of religiosity, it doesn't fool Christ for a second. He sees through the sham, exposes the sin, and calls it what it really is.

He knows the truth and he declares the truth, even when his words are sure to offend his hearers.

When a prophet speaks, you have only two choices:

Listen to what he says.

Disregard his words.

There are no other options. If you say, "I'm going to think about it," that's really the same as disregarding him.

If Jesus is the True Prophet of God, then you must either receive or reject his words. You have to make a choice. There can be no neutrality about Jesus. You are either with him or against him. You either follow him or you ignore him.

What is your verdict about Jesus? Is he really the Son of God? If he is, then crown him King of your life and join the millions who worship him as Savior and Lord.



Lord Jesus, may we not waver in our devotion to you, the great Prophet sent from heaven. Grant us believing hearts that we might follow you gladly. Amen.

March 21

Judge

“He is the One appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42).

Pay attention to that word “appointed.”

God could have appointed an angel but then someone could object that an angel doesn't understand what it means to be human. But Jesus lived for 33 years on this earth and knows what it means to be one of us. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Sometimes we use the phrase “been there, done that” to convey that our experience in a given area is complete. With regard to living on this earth, Jesus could truly say “been there, done that.”

We fear human judgment because no one else can fully understand our predicament or why we do what we do. “You just don't understand,” we say. Or “Try walking a mile in my shoes.” We believe that no one is fully qualified to stand in judgment on our behavior. And it's true that no mere mortal can truly judge our motives—much less every word we say or every deed we perform.

When we try to judge each other we make many mistakes because man looks on the outside but God looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). *What we need is someone who truly knows what we have been through who can also see into our hearts.* Such a man would be truly qualified to be our judge. We have such a man. His name is Jesus. Because he was a man, he knows what we are going through. Because he is God, he can see into every human heart with infallible vision.

Lord of Glory: Judge

How do we know there will be a final judgment and how do we know that Jesus will be the judge? Look to the empty tomb. This answers the question regarding the qualification of Jesus to judge the entire world. He is qualified by virtue of his Incarnation, and his Incarnation is conclusively demonstrated by his Resurrection. He is the Man from heaven who came back from the dead. No one else could ever make that claim. He alone is worthy to stand in judgment over the human race.

He is not just any man, he is the man God appointed—meaning he is divinely ordained to this task. Today he is appointed as your Savior, tomorrow he will be appointed as your Judge. If you do not want him as your Savior, then you will face him as your judge. Hebrews 10:31 reminds us that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” What will you do then?

The time for action is now. No one can escape the final judgment. We will all stand before Jesus Christ. What happens to you then depends on what you do now. Trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and when that day comes you will have nothing to fear.



Lord Jesus, I embrace you as my Savior so that I may not tremble when I stand before you as my Judge. Amen.

March 22

Lion of the Tribe of Judah

“See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah . . . has triumphed”
(Revelation 5:5).

C. S. Lewis understood.

When he wanted to symbolize Jesus in the Chronicles of Narnia, Lewis created Aslan the lion. And not just any lion. He’s the King of Beasts and the real ruler of Narnia. Mostly unseen because he is always on the move, Aslan is powerful and yet kind, gentle but fierce. He is to be feared and revered and honored and trusted.

In one of the most famous bits of conversation in the whole series, Lucy asks the beavers, “Is he safe?” “If there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking,” Mrs. Beaver replies, “they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”

“So he isn’t safe?” asks Lucy.

To which Mr. Beaver replies, “Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

That’s the whole point of this image. Lions aren’t safe, but it matters greatly whether or not they are good. Satan himself is called a “roaring lion” who prowls the earth looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). He’s not safe and he’s definitely not good.

Lord of Glory: Lion of the Tribe of Judah

But Jesus is good and that changes everything.

He came from the tribe of Judah just as Jacob had predicted almost two thousand years earlier (Genesis 49:10). In his first coming he arrived as a helpless baby in the manger. But before long he confounded his teachers, baffled his parents, enraged the power brokers, challenged the hypocrites, and at the same time he welcomed little children, touched the lepers, healed the sick, cast out demons, calmed the storms, cured the blind, and he even raised the dead. As he was dying, he uttered words of forgiveness for his murderers. The Bible sums up his life by saying he “*went around doing good*” (Acts 10:38).

The Lamb who died is the Lion who prevailed over death.

But that is not the end of the story.

He came the first time as the Lamb of God.

He will come again as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

He is the Lamb who is a Lion, the compassionate Savior who will one day rule the world.

Let us learn from this what it means to follow Jesus. Put on the meekness of the Lamb and you will have the strength of the Lion. Follow the Lamb and the Lion will protect you from all your foes.



Lord Jesus, without you we can do nothing. Unless you help us, we are bound to fail. May your mighty strength may flow through us today. Amen.

March 23

Bronze Snake

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up” (John 3:14).

Nearly all of us know John 3:16. Let’s go back two verses and see what leads into that most famous of all the biblical promises. *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up”* (John 3:14). The first part of that verse refers to a strange moment in Israel’s history recorded in Numbers 21. There we learn that during the wilderness wanderings, the people began to murmur against God and Moses by saying *“Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?”* (v. 5).

After 40 years in the desert they were tired of the heat and the sand and the long marches from one place to another. Even the manna seemed disgusting to them. Finally, they had enough. God heard their complaint and sent fiery snakes among the people. Many were bitten and many died. Panic swept across the tribes and they came to Moses and said, “We were stupid to complain after all that God has done for us. Please pray to the Lord that he would remove these poisonous snakes.” When Moses prayed to the Lord, he was instructed to make a bronze snake and put it on a tall pole where the Israelites could see it: *“Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live”* (v. 8). And that’s what happened. Anyone who looked, lived. Those who didn’t, died.

What is the significance of the serpent? Recall that sin entered the human race through the serpent that deceived Eve (Genesis 3:1-6).

Ordinarily lifting up a snake on a pole would be repulsive to the Jews. In this case it meant lifting up the symbol of the very thing that was killing them. John used this vivid image to teach us what the death of Christ really means. God took the hated symbol of Roman oppression (the cross) and turned it into the means of our salvation. Here is the next verse – the verse before the most famous verse in the Bible, “*That whoever believes in him may have eternal life*” (John 3:15).

God has no other plan of salvation. Though some are offended by the bloody cross of Christ, those who look to Jesus are saved forever. Look and live! That’s the gospel invitation.



O God, you could not have made it any simpler. Forgive us for complicating the message of salvation. May multitudes look to Jesus and be saved today. Amen.

March 24

Ark of Salvation

“God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved” (1 Peter 3:20).

Though Noah was a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5), it doesn’t appear that he made any converts outside his own family. When the people of his generation heard Noah warn of coming judgment, they said, “It will never happen.” So for years and years life continued without a change. Eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage. With each passing day old Noah looked like more of a fool than the day before. But finally the heavens opened and the rains came down. When Noah entered the ark, I’m sure his friends pounded on the door and said, “Noah, we’re sorry. You were right and we were wrong. Open up. Let us in.” But it was too late.

This is what the Second Coming will be like for an unbelieving world. It will be business as usual until the very day Jesus returns. Just as the pre-flood generation did not believe Noah, even so the world mocks the idea that Jesus is coming again. They call it a fairy tale because they don’t believe it will really happen.

Just as the flood brought sudden judgment to the world, the return of Christ will do the same. When the waters came, unbelievers were “taken” in sudden death so that only Noah and his family were left. When Jesus returns to the earth, unbelievers will once again be “taken” in death and judgment and only believers will be

Lord of Glory: Ark of Salvation

preserved by God. And just as the ark saved Noah, even so Jesus Christ is the “ark of safety” for those who believe in him.

Only those in the ark were saved. In the same way, outside of Christ there is nothing but certain destruction. Just as God didn't prepare two arks, he doesn't have two plans of salvation. Some people reject Christ because they scoff at the notion that they need to be saved. Take care that what happened to Noah's generation doesn't happen to you.

Come to the Ark of Salvation while there is time. Knock on the door of mercy while the door is open.

One day the flood will come, and then what will you do?



Lord Jesus, you are the only place of lasting safety. I pray for faith that quickly responds to your call. May I not trifle with lesser things when my own destiny hangs in the balance. Amen.

March 25

Word of God

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

Nothing is more invisible than a thought.

You don't know what I am thinking nor can I tell what you are thinking. But let a man speak and his words reveal his thoughts. Take the deepest thought and clothe it in words, and it will be visible to millions. Consider the plays of Shakespeare. They are but the thoughts of Shakespeare made visible through his words.

Jesus reveals God to us.

How fitting that Jesus should be called “the Word” for he communicates the very nature of God to us. John 1:18 reminds us that no one has seen the essence of God the Father, but the Son has “declared him” or “made him known” or “explained him” or “revealed him.” The underlying idea in Greek has the idea of unfolding a truth step by step.

Jesus makes known what we would never discover on our own.

Without Jesus we would never know the fullness of God. We would know him as Creator and Designer of all things (Romans 1:19-20), but we would never know the depth of his compassion toward sinners.

Jesus is the key to the universe for *“all things have been created*

Lord of Glory: Word of God

through him” (Colossians 1:16).

He left his fingerprints everywhere. The galaxies shout out, “He is there.” The wildflowers sing together, “He is there.” The rippling brooks join in, “He is there.” The birds sing it, the lions roar it, the fish write it in the oceans—“He is there.” All creation joins to sing his praise. The heavens declare it, the earth repeats it, and the wind whispers it—“He is there.” Deep cries out to deep, the mighty sequoia tells it to the eagle who soars overhead, the lamb and the wolf agree on this one thing—“He is there.”

Jesus is *“the radiance of God’s glory”* (Hebrews 1:3).

If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. He is not some grimy, blurry image of the Almighty. He isn’t the sun peeking through the clouds. Jesus radiates the glory of God. Theologians have a word for this. They say the Son is “co-essential” with the Father. That means the Father and the Son share the same essence. The Father is God and the Son is God. Jesus is the blazing, magnificent revelation of God himself.

When Jesus speaks, God speaks. While we see his fingerprints everywhere, the best way to hear from him is to spend time daily reading his Word.

Christ speaks to us through the Word of God. Are we listening?



Lord Jesus, speak to us today as we read and believe the Word of God. Open our eyes to see you clearly. Open our ears to hear what you are saying. Give us hearts ready to follow you. Amen.

March 26

Lord of Glory

“None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Let that thought hang in the air for just a moment. “They would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

If they had known . . . If they had understood . . . But they didn’t!

This means that Pilate didn’t know who Jesus was. Yes, he had heard the stories, the wild rumors about healings and miracles and people brought back from the dead. You could hardly keep things like that private. The news had spread like wildfire.

When you read the gospels, Pontius Pilate appears as a kind of tortured soul—a man caught between the demands of his job and a genuine curiosity about Jesus. “What is truth?” he asked. It was not an idle question. He really wanted to know the truth. I do not doubt that he wanted the crowd to choose Barabbas over Jesus. When he washed his hands with water, he was trying to say, “I did the best I could to save this man but I couldn’t. His blood is now on your hands.” It didn’t work, it could never have worked. Pilate stands guilty of a terrible crime—crucifying the Lord of glory. Only he didn’t know he was the Lord of glory. Exactly who he thought Jesus was, we cannot say for certain. But this much we know—he didn’t know, didn’t understand, and so he ordered him crucified.

Lord of Glory: Lord of Glory

The world didn't understand Jesus when he walked on the earth, and the world still doesn't understand him today. That fact ought to give us patience when we talk to unbelievers. Sometimes when lost people say foolish things that are rude and unkind, we may be tempted to retaliate with unkind words of our own. That's almost always a bad idea. It's like cursing a blind man because he can't see the color green.

A beloved spiritual says it this way:

Sweet little Jesus Boy,
they made you be born in a manger.
Sweet little Holy Child,
didn't know who You was.

Didn't know you come to save us, Lord;
to take our sins away.
Our eyes was blind, we couldn't see,
we didn't know who You was.

Do you know that Jesus is the Lord of glory? If so, you know it because God has revealed it to you by his Spirit.

There is no room for boasting, and no need for it either. If you are among those who can see and hear and understand the truth, do not take any credit for it. Get down on your knees and thank God for opening your eyes. Thank God for rescuing you from the pit of despair. Thank God for turning your life around. Thank God for giving you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand his truth.



Lord Jesus, the world didn't know you when you came the first time. Deliver us from making that same mistake today. Open our eyes to see you as you truly are—the one true Lord of Glory. Amen.

March 27

Friend of Sinners

“A friend . . . of sinners” (Luke 7:34).

They meant it as an insult.
They said it with a sneer.

“That Jesus, he hangs out with sinners,” almost spitting out the last word.

“Sinners!”

Prostitutes.
Drunkards.
Troublemakers.
Trashy types.
Low-class, no-count losers.

He wasn't a front-runner. He didn't gravitate to the country club crowd or to the folks with money or lots of letters after their name.

He welcomed anyone who welcomed him.

He had time to talk to the “rich young ruler” who went away sorrowful but Jesus loved him anyway.

To say he was a “friend of sinners” means that he wasn't embarrassed by what anyone had done. His range of friends included Nicodemus and the woman who washed his feet with her tears.

Lord of Glory: Friend of Sinners

“She stood behind him at his feet weeping; she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them” (Luke 7:38). How would you describe this woman? Generous . . . affectionate . . . impulsive . . . demonstrative . . . emotional . . . passionate . . . uninhibited.

Why is she weeping? She loves Jesus and she isn't afraid to show it.

She stands . . . to honor his greatness.

She weeps . . . overwhelmed with sorrow over her past.

She wipes Jesus' feet with her hair . . . a sign of deep humility.

She kisses his feet . . . a gesture of affection and respect.

She anoints his feet . . . in gratitude for what he has done for her.

The people at Simon's dinner party were shocked. How could Jesus allow a woman like that to touch him? Jesus knew what they thought, knew what they were whispering to each other, knew how much they disdained this woman and her extravagant display of love.

He knew and he didn't care what they thought.

Jesus wasn't ashamed to be a “friend of sinners.” Are we?



Lord Jesus, if you were not the “friend of sinners,” we could not be saved. Help us to love the unlovely as you have loved us. Amen.

March 28

Morning Star

“Until the Morning Star rises in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

Think about two stars.

The evening star suggests the slowing down of life as the day ends and night approaches. It has about it the feel of deepening gloom. But the morning star speaks of energy and the approach of another new day with all its uncharted possibilities. The morning star says, “Wake up, you sleepyhead. Rise and shine. A new day has dawned!”

Did you ever try to stay up all night?

It’s not easy. Most people fall asleep by midnight and almost everyone is asleep by 1 AM. But a few hardy souls will stay up until dawn. They will tell you that the hardest hours are from 3-5 AM, when you know the night is mostly past and the dawn can’t be far away, but around you all is black.

Then you see it!

When the morning star rises on the eastern horizon, you know the first rays of dawn are not far away. The long night is almost over.

Small wonder, then, that Jesus himself was announced to the world by a star shining in the east (Matthew 2:1-2). The Magi became the “Wise Men” by following that star all the way to Bethlehem. When the Morning Star rises in our hearts, we too will become

Lord of Glory: Morning Star

wise because we will be filled with the knowledge of Christ. Like the sages of old, the knowledge of our Lord leads us to worship him freely, gladly, and to give him the best that we have.

Do not despair if the world seems to grow darker every day for the darker the night, the brighter the light shines. The stars are for the night, and when the Morning Star shines, it lights up the whole world.

The Morning Star shines as day is about to break. Jesus is coming. Are you ready?



We await your coming from heaven with great anticipation. We are glad the long night is almost over. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

March 29

Amen

“The Amen, the faithful and true witness”
(Revelation 3:14).

Our problem with “Amen” is that we hear it so often that it loses all meaning. For most of us, “Amen” either means, “The prayer is over” or “It’s time to eat.” It’s like the caboose at the end of the train. The word itself comes from the Old Testament and means, “So be it” or “I agree” or “Yes, this is true.” It’s not a throwaway word. The word “Amen” teaches us three things:

First, these things really are true. To say “Amen” means that you affirm the truth of what has just been said.

Second, truth always demands a personal response. That’s why the great creeds of the church end with the word “Amen.” It’s not enough to say what you believe. Adding “Amen” means that you are not only reciting words but that you believe that what you are saying is true.

Third, truth is ultimately wrapped up in Jesus. That’s why “Amen” is one of the names of our Lord. It’s also the last word of the Bible.

William Dowling comments that the whole gospel is like a great “Amen” from God:

To stand for a day is no proof of a well-built house; to triumph for centuries amid the evil or the ignorant is no mark of a true religion. But to abide through all ages, to be

Lord of Glory: Amen

suiting to every land, adapted to each variety of human life and all ages of man's history, that is truly the seal of God set upon the doctrines and precepts of the gospel (*Names and Titles of Jesus Christ*, p. 250).

To say that Jesus is God's "Amen" means that we can trust him completely. He will do what he said he will do. Where can you find a promise he has not kept? Every promise is true because he is the great "Amen" guaranteeing his own divine words.

Fear not, child of God. Your future is as certain as the promises of God. When your earthly journey has run its course, you can say "Amen" and the Lord Jesus himself will welcome you into heaven.



Increase our faith, Lord Jesus, to trust you so much that our whole life will be one great Amen.

March 30

Carpenter's Son

“Isn't this the carpenter's son?” (Matthew 13:55).

It wasn't a compliment.
They meant it as a slur.

These were people from his hometown of Nazareth.

They had seen him grow up.
They knew Mary and Joseph.
They knew his brothers.
Who did Jesus think he was?

In a sense, you could hardly blame the people of Nazareth (a tiny village in Jesus' day) for reacting as they did. It's hard for anyone raised in a small town to escape the box of early labels:

“I doubt she'll ever go to college.”
“He's never worked a day in his life.”
“Her family is on welfare.”
“I knew he'd never amount to much.”

That's not fair, but that's life in small towns. It's not always negative, but sometimes it is, and when people decide that you come from the wrong side of the tracks, that judgment tends to stay with you forever.

So it was with Jesus.

Lord of Glory: Carpenter's Son

The people who knew him best (or thought they did) couldn't take him seriously. "Where does he get off trying to teach us anything? He's Joseph's son."

When Walter Adeney wrote about this incident, he said that the objection of the townspeople was both unnatural and unreasonable. They thought they knew Jesus better than they did.

They knew one thing.
He was the carpenter's son.
That was part of the story, but only one part.

Adeney goes on to remark that "their intimacy with Him ought to have opened their eyes to His unique character." Note the capital letters: "Him" and "His," signifying deity. They knew "him," not "Him," and they knew "his" earthly family, not "His" heavenly origin.

But that leads to an important thought:

The objection they raise against His claims tells really in His favour. They find no fault in His character; they can only complain of His trade.

Their complaint ("Is this not the carpenter's son?") is a "high, unconscious tribute to His excellence."

They were saying more than they knew. They had no dirt on Jesus because there was no dirt to dig up. They could not attack his character because it was pristine, so they slandered his family background.

But that was the best (or the worst) they could do.

Was our Lord ashamed to come from the wrong side of the tracks?
No, not at all.

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Jesus was not ashamed to be one of us. He chose to be a carpenter's son that he might one day lead many sons to glory.

What a Savior!



Lord Jesus, thank you for making a way for us to be saved. While we were yet sinners, you were not ashamed to die for us. Amen.

March 31

Consolation of Israel

“He was waiting for the consolation of Israel”
(Luke 2:25).

As aged Simeon held baby Jesus in his arms, he saw in that tiny infant the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people across the centuries. To call Jesus “the consolation of Israel” takes us back to the time of Abraham when the Lord promised that all the nations on earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:1-3). After that came the reaffirmation to Isaac, and then to Jacob.

Still later God told Moses that one day a great prophet would come who would be unlike any other prophet before him.

Still later God promised David a son who would reign on his throne forever.

Still later God spoke through Isaiah and promised that a son would be born of a virgin, and that his name would be called Immanuel—God with us.

Still later Micah predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

For generations the promises were repeated—from father to son, from mother to daughter, from family to family, from the older to the younger, and Jewish children were taught to pray for the Messiah’s appearance.

By the time you get to the first century, you have all these centuries of expectation built up. In his great work *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim tells us that when Jesus was born there was great excitement in the nation of Israel. While it is true that many people were not expecting anything, it's also true that many others were aware that something was up and that God was beginning to stir the pot of history.

Some Jews thought the Messiah would be a great political leader who would overthrow Rome and restore Israel to its rightful place in the world. Others thought the Messiah would be God himself. Still others expected a second Moses or a second Elijah. So you had a lot of confusion mixed with a general sense of expectation. Edersheim says that by the time Christ was born, one question above all others was on the lips of every expectant Jew: "Why does Messiah delay his coming?"

Now after all those years, after centuries of waiting, all God's promises were coming true as Simeon held the Messiah in his arms. That's what Luke means when he calls Jesus the "consolation of Israel." As the famous Christmas carol says, "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight."



Lord Jesus, you did not leave us alone in our misery. You came!
May we like Simeon praise your name today. Amen.

April 1

Heir of All Things

“His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things”
(Hebrews 1:2).

God has appointed Jesus as heir of all things. I understand this from a personal point of view. When my father died in 1974, I found out that my name had been written in his will. That meant that along with my brothers and my mother, I shared in my father’s estate. It also meant that I received a nice black and white checked sports coat he used to wear. I received it because I was an heir to what my father possessed. The same is true for my three sons—Josh, Mark and Nick. They are named in my will. And after I’m gone, they can go through my clothes and take anything they like. It’s fine with me because I’m planning on a new wardrobe when I get to heaven.

To say that God has appointed Jesus heir of all things means that God has given everything to his Son.

The deepest oceans.
The farthest stars.
The darkest corners.
The highest mountains.
It all belongs to him.

Today it doesn’t appear that everything belongs to Jesus because Satan is a squatter who illegally claims the earth as his domain. But in the end Satan will be overthrown and Jesus installed as the

Lord of Glory: Heir of All Things

rightful king of the universe. This means that when you come to the end of everything, Jesus is there!

It may seem from a brief glance at the scoreboard that Satan is winning in the cosmic struggle between good and evil. But as they say on election night, those are just “partial returns.” When all the votes are counted, those who stand with Jesus will find themselves on the victory side. As Isaac Watts put it in this great hymn written in 1719,

Jesus shall reign where 'ere the sun,
Does its successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

One day every nation will bow before King Jesus. Today that seems impossible as we consider the world scene. But what we see today is not the last word from heaven. One day soon the whole world will know that he is “the heir of all things.”



Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being our all-sufficient Savior. Today we follow by faith. We look forward to the day when our faith will turn to sight and we will see you face to face. Amen.

April 2

Creator of All Things

“For by him all things were created” (Colossians 1:16).

Jesus is the agent of creation and the Lord of the epochs of history. At the Father’s command, he brought the universe into being and wrote the script for the unfolding ages. Through him God made everything. There are really only two choices a person can make as he studies the universe. Either you believe that everything is the result of infinite time plus blind chance or you believe that the universe is the result of God’s divine design. This means that all true science leads back to God. All true biology leads to God. All true botany, all true chemistry, all true physics, all true geology, and all true astronomy leads back to God. The Father delegated to his Son the work of bringing the universe into being and nothing was made except through him.

Let’s make this more personal. Not only did the Lord Jesus create the universe, he also created you and me. Psalm 139:14 says that we were “*fearfully and wonderfully made.*” We owe every part of our physical existence to the Lord Jesus Christ. As one simple example, consider the intricacies of your own blood. Leviticus 17:11 declares that “*the life of the flesh is in the blood.*” Here is a statement made 3500 years ago that scientists now tell us is 100% accurate. Blood is truly the fluid of life. Your blood is made up of cells and plasma. As the blood flows through the heart, it is pumped through arteries, veins and capillaries to every part of your body. The blood delivers oxygen and nutrients and removes waste products. Adults have about 5.3 quarts of blood—almost a gallon and a half. A little over

half is plasma, which contains electrolytes, nutrients and vitamins, carbohydrates, cholesterol, hormones, clotting factors, and proteins such as albumin and immunoglobulins which are really antibodies that fight infection. The cellular portion contains red blood cells (carry oxygen from the lungs), white blood cells (fight infection) and platelets (help clot the blood so you don't bleed to death). Plasma (the liquid portion of the blood) is 90% water, yet the 10% of material dissolved in it is absolutely crucial for proper bodily function. These various elements are pumped by the body as directed by the brain to the places where they are needed most.

The blood flows into the right side of the heart and then goes to the lungs where it deposits carbon dioxide and picks up oxygen. From there the blood goes back to the left side of the heart and then out to the various parts of the body. The average adult heart beats 72 times per minute. In the course of one day the heart beats over 100,000 times. In one year the heart beats almost 38 million times, and by the time you are 70 years old it has beat 2.5 billion times! An average heart pumps 1.3 gallons per minute. In other words it pumps 1,900 gallons per day, almost 700,000 gallons per year, or 48 million gallons by the time someone is 70 years old. That's not bad for a ten-ounce pump!

This just scratches the surface of what the blood does and how it works. And blood is only one part of your body. How can anyone study the complexity of the human body and think that it all happened by chance? It takes more faith to believe that than to believe that your body was divinely created by God.

Jesus is the Lord of your blood. He created it just for you. Every drop comes from him and every drop testifies to his creative power.



Lord of All, deliver us from stubborn vanity and foolish pride. You made us, we left you, you found us, and you redeemed us with your blood. Keep us at your feet in worship and praise. Amen.

April 3

Sustainer of All Things

“Sustaining all things by his powerful word”
(Hebrews 1:3).

Some years ago *U.S. News and World Report* reported that the United States planned to launch a space station into orbit in an attempt to define gravity. That’s an interesting thought. We’ve known what gravity is for hundreds of years, but we don’t know how it works and we really don’t know what it is or where it comes from. There is a vast movement in science today seeking to discover what makes the universe hold together. What is the power behind the power? What is the Ultimate Force in the universe? What makes the universe hold together?

Jesus Christ is the power behind all power. He holds the universe in place by his powerful word.

Note that this is a present tense. Even now Jesus is “sustaining” the whole universe. All things hold together in him and for him and by him. His power is greater than nuclear power and his force is mightier than the mystical “Force” of the Star Wars movies. His might is mightier than the might of all the mighty men on earth.

Think of it. Were he to say the word, New York would be no more. London would vanish. And so would Shanghai, Lagos, Seattle and Juneau. Just a word and we would all perish. Do you realize that if Jesus stopped thinking about you, you would cease to exist? You owe your next breath to the fact that Jesus Christ is thinking about

Lord of Glory: Sustainer of All Things

you. He sustains you so that you can breathe. Without him, you would not be reading these words.

It is ironic to consider that even atheists must use the power he provides to deny his very existence. They shoot their cannons of unbelief on the ground he has provided. The atheists owe their existence to the One they so vigorously deny.

Jesus is the nucleus of creation and “the glue of the galaxies.” Look around you. Why aren’t you flying off into space? It’s not just gravity. You’re held together by the One whose word sustains the universe. Take a breath and give thanks. Without Jesus you wouldn’t breathe at all.



Gracious Lord, thank you for holding my life together when it seems to be falling apart. Amen.

April 4

Redeemer

“The Redeemer will come to Zion” (Isaiah 59:20).

Of all the names that the Bible gives to Jesus Christ, none is more precious than the name Redeemer. There are other names we use more often, such as Lord and Savior, and rightly so because those too are Bible terms, but no word touches the heart like the name Redeemer. When we say Lord, we are recalling that Jesus Christ is the master over sin and death. When we say Savior, we are recalling that he saved us from our sin. But when we say Redeemer, we remember what it cost him to save us. Redeemer is the name of Christ on the cross. When we say that word, the cross is placarded before our eyes. We remember not only that he gave us salvation, but that he paid a mighty price for it.

Herbert Locker said it this way, “Redemption is chief among the doctrines of grace for from it all the rivers of grace flow.”

We are exceedingly valuable to God not because of what we are but because of what it cost Jesus to purchase us. It is not as if God looked down from heaven and said, “Well, these people are worth so much, I have to go down and save them.” No, we all deserve punishment and hell.

Sometimes you will go to an auction and see some little trinket. You might think it is the biggest piece of junk you have ever seen in your life. You say to yourself, “Even if they paid me, I wouldn’t take that.” The bidding starts and you think they will never sell it. The

Lord of Glory: Redeemer

first guy offers \$50. The next guy says \$100. The next says \$200. You just want to stand up and shout, “What’s the matter with you? Have you lost your minds? That’s a worthless piece of junk!” And it ends up selling for \$1000 because it is an heirloom that a great sculptor made two hundred years ago. What was junk to you turns out to be precious to somebody else. In an auction a thing is worth what a person will pay for it. Think what we must be worth to God. Jesus paid for our salvation with his own blood.

We were cowering in the lowest part of the dungeon, chained hand and foot. We hadn’t seen the sunlight since the day we were born. But one day Jesus came and light flooded in. He had the key, he unlocked the chains, opened the door, and we followed him out.

That’s redemption. We have been set free!

Fanny Crosby wrote about it in this beloved gospel song:

Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am.



Blessed Redeemer, you have purchased my salvation at an infinite cost. By your bloody death I have been set free. Amen.

April 5

Propitiation

“He . . . is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

To propitiate means to turn away wrath by offering a gift. In the New Testament the word applies to Jesus’ death on the cross. When Jesus hung on the cross in great agony and great pain, he cried out to God, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” No one fully understands what those words mean, but it was something like this. In that moment all the wrath of God was poured out. It was as if the sewer pit of hell had been emptied on Jesus. He became sin for us. All of your sin and all of my sin and the sins of the whole world were poured out on Jesus, and in that moment God turned his face away from his only begotten son. In that moment, Jesus took the wrath of God for us.

These three truths summarize the effects of propitiation:

1. Because Jesus Christ died, God’s justice is now satisfied.
2. Because Jesus Christ died, God’s wrath has now been turned away. The price for sin has been paid.
3. Because Jesus Christ died, God’s mercy is now freely available to anyone who wants it.

As the famous gospel song says,

Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe,

Lord of Glory: Propitiation

Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

God's heart is open to you because Christ paid the full price and had taken God's wrath upon himself. In the cross we see the true nature of God. He is full of grace and eager to pardon those who trust in his Son.



Lord Jesus, you have settled our case forever by paying with your own blood the debt we could never pay. Amen.

April 6

Way

“I am the way” (John 14:6).

We live in a “postmodern” age. If that term is new to you, it simply means that we live in an age in which our culture has largely abandoned the notion of truth. The old consensus about right and wrong has almost entirely disappeared, replaced by appeals to pluralism, diversity, and moral relativism.

Against the spiritual confusion of our day, consider these “exclusive” claims regarding Jesus Christ:

- A. He is the only Son of God—John 3:16.
- B. He is the only name by which we can be saved—Acts 4:12.
- C. He is the only way to the Father—John 14:6.
- D. He is the only mediator between God and man—1 Timothy 2:5.
- E. He is the only sacrifice for sin—Hebrews 10:12.

These are utterly exclusive statements of the New Testament. We have no right to water them down. You may choose to reject them or to call them “narrow-minded” or to pass them off as not applying to us today, but the fact remains that the Jesus of the Bible is an utterly exclusive Savior. He stands alone and no one can be compared with him.

When it comes to Jesus, too many people have a “hand grenade” faith. They think that “close” is good enough. Wrong! Most everyone believes in Jesus a little bit. That is, they believe in Jesus plus something else. But when you scratch under the surface, they

Lord of Glory: Way

don't believe in Jesus alone as their only hope of salvation. But to believe in him 95% is to be 100% lost.

Because Jesus is the only way to God, let me share with you five words that will take you all the way to heaven. If you take these five words to heart, and make them part of your life, if you will say them and believe them and rest upon them, these five words will take you to heaven when you die:

Jesus only and only Jesus!



Lord Jesus, you are the only Savior because you are the only one who can save us. We need no one else and indeed we have no one else besides you. Thank you for making a way for sinners to be saved. Amen.

April 7

Desire of All Nations

“I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come” (Haggai 2:7).

This fascinating verse apparently has a double meaning. It applies first to the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel. In that sense God promises that the wealth of the nations will flow into the temple in Jerusalem. The rest of the verse promises that God will fill the rebuilt temple with his glory.

Christians have traditionally seen in this verse a foreshadowing of the coming of Christ because Jesus in John 2:20-21 referred to his body as “this temple,” meaning that in his life, death and resurrection, he would fulfill what the temple pictured through its design, its priesthood, its furniture, and its sacrifices. Jesus is the ultimate “Desire of All Nations” and the radiance of God’s glory. What the temple pictured, Christ fulfilled.

But that’s not all.

When the writer of Hebrews contemplated the coming end of the age, he quoted Haggai 2:6 and applied it to the coming of Christ:

At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain (Hebrews

12:26-27).

That's what God is doing in our day. He's shaking the nations—literally!—so that the world will be ready for the coming of Christ. When Eugene Peterson paraphrased the last part of verse 27 in *The Message*, he said that God will shake the earth, “getting rid of all the historical and religious junk so that the unshakable essentials stand clear and uncluttered.” Unshakable essentials. That says it all. God is shaking the earth so that we will figure out what matters most.

Jesus is the only one who can fulfill the deepest desires of the human heart. As Pascal said, there is a God-shaped vacuum inside every person. If we do not fill the vacuum with God, we are bound to fill it with the spiritual junk food of this world, but in that case we will never be satisfied.

Shall all nations desire Him whom I know, and desire in vain, while I possess to any extent the means of making him known to them? (John East)

The nations will never live in peace until they know Jesus. Can we be at peace while they live without him?



Lord Jesus, while we wait for your return, help us to make you known in every nation. Amen.

April 8

Rejected Stone

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (Psalm 118:22).

This image comes from the ancient quarries where highly-trained stonemasons carefully chose the stones used in construction. No stone was more important than the cornerstone because the integrity of the whole structure depended on the cornerstone containing exactly the right lines. If the cornerstone was not exactly right, the entire building would be out of line. For that reason, builders inspected many stones, rejecting each one until they found the one they wanted. Rejected stones might be used in other parts of the building, but they would never become the cornerstone or the capstone (the first and last stones put in place).

When Peter preached to the Jewish leaders in Acts 4:8-12, he quoted Psalm 118:22 to show that Jesus is the rejected stone whom God made to be the cornerstone of salvation. They (the Jewish leaders) rejected him, but God not only accepted him but put him in the position of highest honor.

Peter pressed the point home with this powerful conclusion: *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). These words are utterly exclusive. There is no other hope, no other way, and no other name than the name of Jesus. If we would be saved, we must come God’s way or we won’t come at all.

Lord of Glory: Rejected Stone

Do not be like the builders who rejected God's Stone of salvation. Do not reject Jesus Christ. Do not stumble over this rejected stone. The very stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. May God open your eyes to see Jesus as he really is—the Cornerstone of eternal salvation.



O Lord, you are the only solid foundation in this world of sinking sand. Keep our feet on the Rock and our hearts loving you. Amen.

April 9

Living Stone

“As you come to him, a living stone . . . you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house”
(1 Peter 2:4-5).

When Peter calls Jesus the “living Stone,” he also says that we who believe are like “living stones.” That means that he is the Rock and we are like chips off the Living Block. A living stone sounds strange to our ears because stones are always dead. But when we come into contact with Jesus Christ, we are made alive with him. That tells us that the church is more than a human organization. *The true church is an ever-growing collection of living stones, being built one upon another by the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ.* From our perspective, the church often seems weak, confused, uncertain, competitive, divided and ineffective. But our Lord is building a spiritual temple that spans the generations. And he’s building it one living stone at a time. That temple matters much more than the most beautiful sanctuary or the most ornate cathedral built of brick and mortar.

The greatest buildings on earth will one day crumble to the ground. Nothing built by man lasts forever. Because the temple God is building is made of living stones, it will never be destroyed. It will never crumble and it will never need renovation. And we who believe are part of it. *Every Christian is part of God’s temple.* You can always tell when a new building is being constructed by the massive scaffolding that encircles the new building as it rises from the ground. As long as you see the scaffolding, you know the building

isn't finished. The scaffolding is the last thing to go. But when it is removed, you know the building is finished. Every local church is part of the visible scaffolding around the invisible temple God has been building. When the final living stone has been placed in the temple, the scaffolding will come tumbling down, the trumpet will sound, the archangel will shout, and we will get to see the grand work God has been doing for the last twenty centuries.

This is a revolutionary insight if we will grasp it. I know people get frustrated by how slow the church moves. We have so many meetings and groups and we talk a lot about budgets and buildings and programs. It's easy to lose sight of the big picture if you focus on the ecclesiastical machinery, even though that machinery is necessary for the church to do its work in the world. But God is doing something beyond all of that.

Jesus is building his church with living stones, and the church he is building will last forever.



Lord Jesus, we confess our impatience with the church as we see it today. Forgive us for focusing on what man does instead of what you are doing. O Lord, add some more living stones to your church today! Amen.

April 10

Cornerstone

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (1 Peter 2:7).

Jesus is a problem for a lot of people.
Some people admire him but they don't worship him.
Others respect him but they don't trust him.

Some people don't care for him at all. The world stumbles over Jesus because it has no use for him. Peter says it in some startling ways:

- 1) The religious leaders (the builders) rejected him.
- 2) But God made him the Savior of the world anyway.
- 3) Christ causes men to stumble because they choose to disobey.

There is a warning here that we must not miss. *The same stone that saves some causes others to stumble.* Twice Peter uses the word “precious” to describe Jesus (1 Peter 2:4, 6). But to the world, Jesus is not precious at all. You can't tell the value of something just by checking popular opinion. The world was wrong about Jesus 2000 years ago, and the world is still wrong about him today. You cannot be neutral about Jesus. He will save you or he will crush you, and there is no third choice.

Jesus is not only the cornerstone, he is also the touchstone of history. *Now that he has been revealed from heaven, no one can avoid him.* That's one reason unbelievers often grow frustrated. They

Lord of Glory: Cornerstone

keep coming face to face with Jesus and they don't know what to do with him. They stumble and fall over him, and sometimes you want to say, "Man! Open your eyes. That's the Cornerstone you're stumbling over."

What is Jesus to you? Is he your cornerstone or is he still a stumbling stone? What is the foundation of your life? Build it on Jesus and you will never be disappointed. You will never be moved, you will never be toppled, and you will never be put to shame.



Lord Jesus, in this shaky world you are the Cornerstone of the ages. Help us to build our lives upon the foundation that will never be moved. Amen.

April 11

Friend of Tax Collectors

“A friend of tax collectors” (Matthew 11:19).

This was not a compliment.

The older translations use the word “publican” instead of tax collector. That was actually a job title for those who served the Roman government as public contractors by supplying goods and services to the Roman legions. In that role they collected duty (import tax) at the various ports where supplies arrived from other countries. The publicans also took part in what was called “tax farming” whereby they would purchase the right to collect taxes for a certain region. They agreed to pay Rome a certain amount in taxes. Anything they collected over that amount became pure profit to them. The situation was thus ripe for corruption.

You can easily imagine that the people in distant provinces (like Judea or Galilee) would have no use for their local tax collector in the first place. After all, he took their money and sent it to far-off Rome. If he had a reputation for charging beyond the normal tax rate, people would despise him all the more.

But Jesus hung out with tax collectors.

In fact, when he wanted to illustrate what it means to be truly justified before God, he used the example of the Pharisee and the tax collector (publican) in Luke 18:9-14. That story must have stung the religious leaders because the proud Pharisee was not accepted by God, but the hated tax collector found forgiveness

Lord of Glory: Friend of Tax Collectors

because he humbled himself before the Lord.

This reveals something about our Lord and something about ourselves. It tells us that Jesus reached out to anyone who was willing to listen to him. He didn't pay attention to a person's reputation or standing in the community. The heart mattered to him. It also tells us that while our religion can never save us, the good news is that our past can't keep us from salvation.

If we will come to Jesus in simple faith, he will take us in and be our friend too.



Thank you, Lord Jesus, for welcoming people the world rejects. Teach us to love others as you have loved us. Amen.

April 12

Apostle

“Consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession” (Hebrews 3:1).

Jesus the apostle.

It doesn't sound quite right to us because we're used to thinking of Paul the apostle or James the apostle.

This is the only time Jesus is called an apostle.

The word itself means “one sent as a messenger.” When applied to the twelve apostles, it means that they were chosen by Jesus and sent into the world in his name and bearing his message. When applied to Jesus, it means that he was sent from the Father to be the Savior of the world. We can see this clearly in John 3:17,

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

When Charles Spear wrote on this title, he said that the word “apostle” implies three things:

1. You must be sent by someone else.
2. You must be sent on a particular mission.
3. You must be sent with sufficient power to accomplish the mission.

See how perfectly Christ fits this description. He was sent by the

Lord of Glory: Apostle

Father in heaven. He was sent to be the Savior of the world. He was sent with all the prerogatives of deity clothed in human flesh.

We all know of grand human projects that never came to fruition. Sometimes there is not enough money. Sometimes the plan is voted down. Sometimes the project fails because of lack of knowledge. We may have the means but not the power or the opposition may be too great.

But Jesus was the Great Finisher. He completed the work the Father sent him to do. We are going to heaven because Christ our Apostle did not fail in his holy mission of redemption. Shall the one who laid the cornerstone of the universe be unable to provide salvation for his people? It is impossible.

The Father sent the Son, and the Son finished the work the Father sent him to do.



Lord Jesus, as the Father sent you, you now send us to every nation with the Good News. May we be faithful to tell others that you are the one and only Savior of the world. Amen.

April 13

Fragrant Offering

“Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2).

Who killed Jesus?

That question has echoed down the ages. Did the Jews kill Jesus? Was Pilate guilty of murder? What about Caiaphas the high priest and Herod the king? What role did the centurions play? What about the crowd shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”?

And we can't forget Judas who betrayed him.

Each person and each group mentioned had a role to play in the unfolding drama of redemption. But in the larger sense, no one “took” his life because he “gave himself up for us.”

You cannot understand the love of God unless you go to the cross. You cannot understand the cross unless you see in it the outpouring of God's love. Christ's death became a sacrifice that was a “fragrant offering” to God. The NLT uses the phrase “a sweet aroma.”

If we had been there on that Friday in early April, we would have been repulsed by the odor. Crucifixion was a ghastly way to die. The Romans intended to make it brutal and bloody. They had mastered the art of cruel killing. That day at Calvary the smell of death was everywhere.

But the cross smelled good to God. He was well-pleased by the

Lord of Glory: Fragrant Offering

sacrifice of his Son.

Man's murder became God's sacrifice.
A heinous crime paid an impossible debt.

Through the death of an innocent man, we the guilty go free. After the cross, how can we ever doubt God's love for us? Ponder these words from a hymn by Isaac Watts:

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?



Lord Jesus, may the fragrance of the cross fill my life today that I may not forget your love for me. Amen.

April 14

Our Passover Lamb

“Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed”
(1 Corinthians 5:7).

Either the lamb dies.
Or the firstborn of the family dies.

The blood must be shed either way. Suppose you were an Israelite being asked to sacrifice your prized lamb and smear its blood on the door for all the neighbors to see. Would you do it? Or would you be embarrassed by such a thought?

Someone reading about the first Passover might say, “This story is absurd!” *But I assure you that it is entirely true.* Suppose an Israelite had refused to sacrifice a lamb. His firstborn would have died that night. Being a Jew could not save on that fateful night. It’s not national origin that matters to God but faith in God’s appointed way of salvation.

In the same way, it is not your religious affiliation that matters to God. *It’s not about being Catholic or Baptist or Lutheran* or And it doesn’t have anything to do with your education, your wealth, your status, your achievements, the money you’ve made, the awards you’ve won, and it certainly doesn’t involve how many important people you know.

God wants to know one thing, “Do you have faith that the blood of Jesus can wash away all your sins?” Jesus is the Lamb of God

Lord of Glory: Our Passover Lamb

who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The blood of Jesus cleanses us from every sin (1 John 1:7). *What the Passover lamb represented in the Old Testament, Jesus fulfills in the New Testament.*

Thank God for our Passover Lamb. His blood delivers us from judgment and opens the door to heaven.



Heavenly Father, thank you for providing a way for sinners like us to be saved. By the blood of Jesus we have passed over from death to life everlasting. Amen.

April 15

Fountain

“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity” (Zechariah 13:1).

The Bible often uses the image of the fountain to convey the idea of being cleansed from sin. In Jeremiah 2:13 the Lord speaks with sorrow to the nation of Israel:

My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, *the spring of living water*, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

We find this beautiful invitation near the end of the Bible:

To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from *the spring of the water of life* (Revelation 21:6).

When we think of the word “fountain,” we probably have in mind a fountain in a public park that sprays water into the air. But in the Bible the word means something closer to the word “spring.” The “fountain” refers to the source of pure, clean, refreshing water.

That fountain starts in heaven at the throne of God and flows down to earth. It’s the fountain of living water that brings us eternal life. That fountain is indeed as deep as God’s mercy and as wide as God’s heart. You will never come to the end of the fountain of living water.

Lord of Glory: Fountain

Revelation 7:14 dramatically changes the imagery to include the blood of Christ:

“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

From that image we get familiar gospel songs such as “Nothing but the Blood” and “Are You Washed in the Blood?” It is sometimes said that the idea of being “washed in the blood” is primitive and repulsive to the modern mind and that we shouldn’t sing songs like that. Some hymnals have even taken out all mention of the blood of Christ because it offends some people. But it is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from every sin (1 John 1:7).

Some 220 years ago there was a man in England by the name of William Cowper. He had a nervous disposition and often struggled with bouts of severe depression. At one point he became extremely depressed, fearing that he was under the wrath of God:

“I flung myself into a chair by the window and there saw the Bible on the table by the chair. I opened it up and my eyes fell on Romans 3:25, which says of Christ, ‘Whom God has made a propitiation through faith in his blood.’ Then and there, I realized what Christ’s blood had accomplished and I realized the effects of his atonement for me. I realized God was willing to justify me, and then and there, I trusted Jesus Christ and a great burden was lifted from my soul.”

Looking back on that day, William Cowper wrote a hymn that we still sing today:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stain.

Has the blood of Jesus ever been applied to your heart? Never be ashamed of the blood of Christ for that blood has opened the door of heaven.



In your kindness, Holy Father, you have made for sinners to be saved. Thank you for the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from every sin. Amen.

April 16

Mediator

“There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

A quick check of the headlines reveals the fractured state of the world:

“Judge tells NFL and players to keep at it, with new mediator.”

“Mediator tries to broker Tribune deal.”

“President casts himself as mediator.”

“Turkey plays mediator in Libya crisis.”

Everyone needs a mediator, or so it seems.

Nowhere is the need greater than in our relationship with God. A mediator is someone who can represent both sides in an estranged relationship.

Jesus qualifies because he is God and man at the same time. Fully God and fully man.

Because he shares our humanity, he represents us before the Father. Because he is God incarnate, he can bear the burden of our sins.

Note that there is “one mediator” and only one between God and man. No one else can do what Jesus does. He “stands in the gap” between God and man, making peace by the blood of the cross.

When God called for Adam after the Fall, the guilty head of the

Lord of Glory: Mediator

human race hid because of his shame. But now we do not shrink from God, sinners though we are, because Jesus our mediator has opened the way to the Father.

If he were less than God or less than man, he could not be our mediator, much less the “one mediator” for the whole human race. But he is more than enough for this sin-stricken world. He raises his pierced hands and all accusations against us must cease. “What can ever break a reconciliation so dearly bought, so effectually made, and so firmly secured?” (John East)

When times are tough, the nights long, the days dreary, when fearful thoughts threaten to overwhelm us, when life perplexes or death alarms us, let us come with confident faith to Jesus our Lord who is exalted in heaven as our “One Mediator.”



Lord Jesus, because you are the great sin-bearer, you are all we need now and forever. Thank you for doing for us what we could never do for ourselves. Amen.

April 17

Man of Sorrows

“He was . . . a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3).

Did you know that the Bible never tells us that Jesus smiled or laughed? I’m sure that he did, but the gospels never mention it. Isaiah 53:3 calls him “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” When he was born, Herod tried to kill him. When he began his ministry, the people in his hometown took offense at him (Mark 6:3). In the closing hours of his life, he was betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter. His sufferings did not begin on the cross, but it was his suffering that led him to the cross.

It is said that Bernard of Clairvaux in the 12th century first penned the words to the hymn *O Sacred Head Now Wounded*. The second verse speaks to the issue of our sin and the death of Christ:

What thou, my Lord, hast suffered was all for sinners’ gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly
pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! ’Tis I deserve thy place;
Look on me with thy favor, and grant to me thy grace.

That verse captures the whole problem of the human race—”mine, mine was the transgression.” We’ve done well in that department, haven’t we? Our sins have cut us off from God so we are left to our own feeble devices. Most of us think of ourselves as pretty good people, or at least we’re not as bad as the fellow next door. And it’s

true—we haven't done every terrible thing that others have done. But still our hands are not clean. We have cheated. We have lied. We have gossiped. We have falsely accused. We have made excuses. We have cut corners. We have lost our temper. We have mistreated others. When we finally get a glimpse of the cross of Christ, we see how great our sin really is. In the light of Calvary, all our supposed goodness is nothing but filthy rags.

Isaiah 53 contains the good news we all need. He was bruised—for us. He was wounded—for us. He was beaten, betrayed, mocked, scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified—all for us. Our sins drove Jesus to the cross. But he did not go unwillingly. If our sins drove him there, it was his love for us that kept him there.

If you want to go to heaven, pay attention to Isaiah 53:6. In the King James Version, it reads this way: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* Notice that it begins and ends with the word “all.” One man gave his testimony this way: “I stooped down low and went in at the first ‘all.’ Then I stood up straight and walked out at the last ‘all.’” The first “all” tells us that we are sinners; the last “all” tells us that Christ has paid the price for our sins. Go in at the first “all” and come out at the last “all” and you will discover the way of salvation.

After Calvary, God has nothing left to prove to anyone. How can you doubt his love after you look at the bleeding form of Jesus hanging on the cross?

We understand our own sorrows a bit better when we see them refracted through the bloody haze of Good Friday. See him on the cross, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He knows what you are going through, he will personally comfort you, and in the end, you will be blessed.



How beautiful are your wounds, Lord Jesus. How amazing your grace to those who attacked you. You were truly a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. By your stripes we are healed and through your death we are forgiven. Glory to you, Lord Jesus, for your suffering has set us free. Amen.

April 18

The One They Have Pierced

“The one they have pierced” (Zechariah 12:10).

It is not often appreciated that our Lord Jesus died in terrible pain. If you run the clock back from 3 o'clock in the afternoon—the moment of his death—back to about 3 o'clock in the morning and review what had happened to Jesus as he moves through those hours—what you discover is that our Lord Jesus Christ has just been through 12 hours of torture.

Arrested in the middle of the night.

Slapped.

Pushed around.

Mocked.

Slapped again.

Crowned with thorns that went into his scalp.

Scourged with a larger strap studded with bits of bone and stone
and metal.

His beard ripped out.

Beaten again and again.

Nails driven through his hands and feet.

Crucified.

At this point a strange question comes to mind. Was Jesus a failure? You could make a good case that the answer is yes. Just look at his life. He was born into an unimportant family in an unimportant

little village. He was ignored, he was taken for granted, he was laughed at. When he speaks, the powers that be want nothing to do with him. He faces ridicule, opposition, and misunderstanding all his life. In the end he is crucified like a criminal. His sufferings in those last few hours are unspeakable. When he dies he appears to be yet another forgotten footnote in history. Working with the facts on one level, you could make the case that our Lord was a failure.

But his death is not the end of the story.
Jesus did not fail in what he came to do.
He perfectly fulfilled the Father's will.

Run to the cross. Cling to it. Embrace the sufferings of Christ. Though this cannot lessen your pain, it may give you strength to carry on. Jesus suffered *before* you; he also suffered *for* you. Child of God, remember this: As Friday comes before Sunday, so the cross leads on to the empty tomb. And there is no resurrection unless there is first a crucifixion.

On this Good Friday, let's make our prayer the final verse of *O Sacred Head Now Wounded*.



What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever, and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee.

April 19

A Dead Man Named Jesus

“A dead man named Jesus” (Acts 25:19).

Death is never easy to deal with.

Most of the time we can avoid it or postpone it or keep it far away from us. But sometimes death stares us in the face and we don't know what to do or how to respond.

The four gospels do not tell us much about what happened on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We know that after Jesus died, the disciples stayed behind locked doors for fear of the Jewish leaders (John 20:19). Their fear was well-founded because on that Saturday the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate and asked him to order the tomb sealed to prevent the disciples from stealing Jesus' body (Matthew 27:62-66). After the resurrection, those same religious leaders would bribe the guards so they would spread the rumor that the disciples had indeed stolen Jesus' body from the tomb (Matthew 28:11-15). In a bizarre twist, Jesus' opponents had a greater belief in his resurrection than his disciples. The only other detail we know about Saturday is that because it was the Sabbath, the women who were with Jesus at the cross rested according to the commandment (Luke 23:56).

In the various Christian traditions this day goes by several names: Holy Saturday, Great Saturday, Easter Eve, and Silent Saturday.

There are not many liturgical practices associated with this day. *It is meant for rest and reflection because on this day Jesus “rested” in the tomb.* Often this day is used to prepare food for the great Easter celebration that comes on Sunday. Some churches celebrate the Easter Vigil that begins after sundown on Saturday night.

It is a long day, this Silent Saturday. In many ways it represents life as it is for all of us. Though we like to say that we live on the other side of Easter, and that of course is true in the ultimate sense, it is also true that we live somewhere between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. *The crucifixion is behind us, but death is still with us and the final victory lies somewhere in the future.* Every funeral reminds us that *“the final enemy that will be destroyed is death”* (1 Corinthians 15:26). Death was defeated by Jesus, but it has not yet been destroyed. That happy day is still in front of us.

The message of Holy Saturday is, “Get ready. Something is about to happen, but it hasn’t happened yet.” Thank God, we’re not moving back toward the crucifixion. It may be Saturday but we’re moving toward Easter. Sunday’s coming. All we’ve got to do is hold on a little while longer and Sunday will soon be here.

Keep the faith, brothers and sisters. Yesterday our Lord was crucified. Today his body lies in the tomb. Tomorrow he rises from the dead. Saturday can seem like a long day—and it is—but be of good cheer. The crucifixion is behind us, Saturday will not last forever. Sooner than we think, Sunday will be here.

We are Easter people marching from Good Friday through Holy Saturday on our way to Easter Sunday. We’re not quite there but we’re moving in the right direction.

It’s Saturday, but Sunday’s coming. Let that thought give strength to your heart today.



O Lord, waiting is so hard. And waiting is what this day is all about. Grant us faith while we wait so that we will not lose heart but will be ready to rejoice when Sunday finally comes. Amen.

April 20

The Resurrection and the Life

“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).

Notice how personal this is.

Jesus doesn't say, “*I bring resurrection and life*” but rather “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” In the presence of Jesus, death is no longer death. It is something else entirely. As Paul says later in the New Testament, death has now lost its sting, and the grave its victory.

How can that be? The answer seems to be that death has been transformed by Jesus himself. I remind you that our Lord often used the word “sleep” to describe death. When he saw Jairus' daughter, he said, “*The child is not dead but sleeping*” (Mark 5:39). When he told the disciples that Lazarus was asleep (John 11:11), they were relieved because then they knew he would eventually wake up. Sleep is natural and normal, which is why no one calls the paramedics when you lie down to take a nap. The whole point of sleeping is to wake up later. Death for the believer is like lying down to a good long nap. The body may sleep a long time—for many years in fact—but in the end it will wake up. When Jesus raised Lazarus, it was just a specimen, a sample of what he will do for his people when he returns to the earth.

But it's very personal with Jesus. The answer to death is not a resurrection. It's Jesus himself. “I am the resurrection and the life.”

No one can ever hope to escape death unless he is related to Jesus through personal faith.

Here's something you may not have considered. Lazarus was raised from the dead only to die again later. Why did Jesus raise him? So that we would know that he could do it. After all, anyone could say "I am the resurrection and the life," but only the Son of God could do what Jesus did.

It's Easter Sunday. What does this day mean? It means that through Jesus Christ you can be released from the fear of death. But there's a question you must answer. It's the question found at the end of verse 26. We generally overlook the question, but it's the key to what Jesus said. When I've asked people to quote the passage, they always stop before the question. But if you skip the question, then you miss the whole point.

Here's the question. "Do you believe this?" That's the supreme question of Easter. In the end truth must always become personal. So I ask you, "Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life?"

With those words we bring our Lenten journey to an end. I hope you have enjoyed these short meditations on the names and titles and descriptions of our Lord. May we love him more and more.

He is risen! He is risen indeed!



Lord Jesus, what would we do without you? Where could we go but to the Lord? You alone have the words of eternal life. We pray for those who do not know you. May they find the Rock of Ages. Thank you for giving us hope that death cannot destroy. Amen.

Thank You

We hope you have enjoyed this journey through the Lenten season with us!

Would you consider making a donation so that we could offer this book and thousands of other resources free to people around the world through our website?

Thank you and God bless you!

Donate to Keep Believing Ministries