

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

MAN'S RESPONSE TO CHRIST

LESSON THREE

Man's **RESPONSE** to Christ



LESSON 8

MAN'S REACTION IMPERATIVE

Man's guilt and the response of Christ to that guilt through His redemptive sacrifice were the dominating themes of preaching in the New Testament era.

After the apostle Paul preached the Word of God in Athens, the results are stated in the following words: "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed" (Acts 17:32-34).^{*} Christ always produces a reaction; He cannot be ignored. The mixed response of the Athenians is typical of all ages — some will mock Him, others will raise a questioning ear, and still others will accept Him. The promises of the gospel, however, are to those who will accept Him.

Every human heart must reckon with Christ. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" (Matthew 22:41-42) To restate the essential facts of Jesus' life and character would be to lay before us the strongest reasons why Christ cannot be ignored.

HE IS THE SON OF GOD. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37). The confession of this fact is of great significance in the New Testament. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

^{*} Read the text of all scriptural references. All quotations in this lesson are taken from the King James Version. For those using other versions, the words may differ but the meanings are the same.

HE IS THE WORLD'S GREATEST TEACHER. He deals with truths which span the ages, which challenge the human mind anew in each generation. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). He loses Himself in His quest for truth and in His desire to bring men to a knowledge of that truth. He spoke to a multitude when He delivered the Sermon on the Mount. He employed familiar objects of nature to illustrate His truths; He used timeless settings for His parables. His message is direct, penetrating, and relevant. He is merciless in His condemnation of hypocrisy and sin, but tender and compassionate toward the downtrodden and friendless. A personal magnetism held His listeners to His words. Certain officers sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Him returned saying, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). This is the verdict of the ages.

HE IS THE SAVIOR OF MEN. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph saying, "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21). Just before His death Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:26-28). "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12).

When the Son of God and the Savior of the world speaks, everyone must respond in some way. They may renounce His claims or they may accept Him and follow Him. This is the choice that lies before the world.

DEFINING A RESPONSIVE FAITH

But what is involved in "accepting Christ"? What did the people do in the first century to become His disciples?

Accepting Christ involves believing in Him as the Son of God. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). The deity of Christ must be believed: "...for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Believing any proposition is possible for an intelligent mind only if the evidence is capable of supporting it. The Word of Christ provides this evidence. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). This Word records Jesus' teaching, His sinless life, and His miracles. An eyewitness of these came to the Saviour by night, saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2).

Accepting Christ demands repenting of one's sins. After the apostle Paul spoke in pagan Athens, he concluded saying, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Repentance is an act of the human will; it is the determination to cease doing evil and begin doing good, or cease disobedience and begin obedience. It is preceded by a sorrow for sin. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation..." (II Corinthians 7:10). It necessarily results in a changed life.

Accepting Christ includes a confession of faith in Him as Lord. Paul wrote this to the disciples at Rome, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus... thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). See also Matthew 10:32, 33; Acts 8:36, 37; I Timothy 6:12.

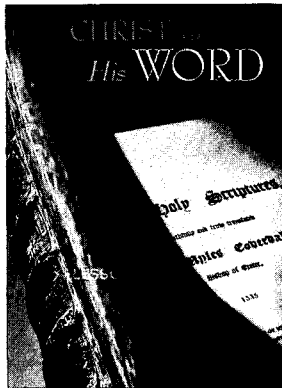
SUBMITTING TO CHRIST IN BAPTISM

Accepting Christ requires baptism (a burial in water) for the remission of sins. Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus, "And now why

tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Sprinkling and pouring for baptism were introduced in the second century and were unknown to the New Testament church. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4).

Baptism is commanded by our Savior. It is fatal to ignore any command of our Savior. There are no non-essential commands. “He still lives and sits on David’s throne at the right hand of God” (Acts 2:22-37).

Finally, salvation demands a daily walk in the service of Christ (See Luke 9:23; I John 1:7; Revelation 2:10).



YOUR NEXT LESSON . . .

Christ and His Word exalts the divine origin of the doctrine of Christ and the transmission of that doctrine to man — by means of the Holy Spirit, the apostles of Christ, and the New Testament.

LESSON THREE: REVIEW

The questions below are based on the following passages in the Word of God: Acts 17:30-34; Matthew 22:41-42; Matthew 16:13-18; Acts 8:36-37; Romans 10:9-17; John 7:46; Matthew 26:26-28; Acts 4:11-12; Mark 16:15-16; II Corinthians 7:10; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4. Read each passage carefully and thoroughly before completing the exercise. The questions are designed for brief answers — sometimes only one word, or a few words, or a sentence at the most.

1. Those who heard the preaching of the resurrection reacted in what way?

2. What was the central question confronting men during the ministry of Jesus?

3. What were some of the popular views men held concerning the identity of Jesus?

4. What did Peter believe about Jesus?

5. On what condition could the Ethiopian be baptized?

6. What specific truth is man taught to confess?

7. Why did the Jewish officers who were sent to arrest Jesus return without Him?

8. In the Lord's Supper what does the Bread and the Fruit of the Vine represent?

9. Why did Jesus shed His blood?

10. What is the only name through which men can be saved?

11. To whom did Christ want the gospel preached?

12. By what means is faith created in the human heart?

13. What command shows that God did not accept the Athenians' ignorance as being justifiable?

14. What leads one to repentance?

15. What is the meaning of repentance?

16. What is the purpose of baptism?

17. Baptism symbolizes what events in the experience of Christ?

18. Therefore, baptism in the scriptures always follows what form?

19. In the second century, what form of baptism was introduced that was a departure from the doctrine of Christ?

20. What word characterizes the kind of life a person lives after baptism?

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