

Bible Basics Conference 2011: “Christ the Lord, Christ the Head, Christ the King”

Part 3

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[00:00:00] Thank you, Hugh.

One of the things that we are all very much aware of is the fact that the Lord, whom we have been hearing has supreme authority, is the one who was rejected when he was here on earth. And there is scarce a chapter in any of the four Gospels, for example, where that rejection isn't apparent. When we read the Gospel of John in chapter one, we only [00:01:11] get as far as verse ten, when we read that he was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not.

Now of the many scriptures that one could select in connection with his rejection, I've chosen three. And the first is a quotation from Psalm 110 verse one, which the Lord refers [00:02:01] to in Matthew 22. I'm afraid the reference there to Matthew 23 is incorrect, it should be Matthew 22. And you may remember that in the course of that chapter, the leaders in the nation, one by one, went to the Lord Jesus with their contrived questions, and they sought to entangle him in his talk. They sought to make him look silly. But the Lord Jesus was able, of course, in each instance to show that they were in ignorance of the truth of scripture that they professed to know so well, [00:03:15] and that in fact they were in error. And at the conclusion of this passage, at the end of Matthew chapter 22, the Lord Jesus turns the situation round completely by asking the Pharisees a question, referring to Psalm 110 verse one, when he says, how is it that David calls his own son Lord? When [00:04:12] he writes in Psalm 110 verse one, Jehovah said to my Lord, sit thou there at my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. And they were unable to answer the Lord because they didn't recognize the Lord Jesus as David's Lord, as David's Adon, and they didn't recognize or submit to the Lord Jesus as their own Lord. Now this is really very significant because what we would say today about this group of people is [00:05:09] that they were opinion makers. And what the Pharisees thought, what the leaders in the nation of Israel thought about the Lord influenced everybody around them. And the fact that the leaders didn't recognize him eventually led to his rejection in effect by the entire nation. We find his claims, all his claims were repudiated. And when he confessed in the council of the Jews that he was the Christ, the son of God, he was condemned to death for

blasphemy. And we read in first Corinthians chapter two, verse eight, that if the princes of this world had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. [00:06:22] So we can see what the opinion of the Jews and what the opinion of the nations was in relation to the Lord. They didn't want him and they would not accept his authority over them going so far as to put him to death.

What is God's answer?

[00:07:05] God has completely reversed these human verdicts and established him as Lord and Christ now.

And that's what Peter says when he addressed children of Israel in Acts chapter two, verse 36.

One of the interesting things about this verse, if you look it up in Acts chapter two, you will find that immediately before he speaks these words, Peter quotes Psalm 110 verse one. [00:08:03] Because what God has done in saying to the Lord Jesus when the world had done to him what it did, sit thou there at my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet, is to vouchsafe that the authority of the Lord Jesus will be acknowledged. That he will be, in God's own time scale, acknowledged by everyone as both Lord and Christ.

Sorry? Escape. That's what I was going to say, a lot of speakers have that, you know. [00:09:06] Thank you. Okay, okay. Um, it is sadly all too apparent today that there are many who occupy a place of public office who are unworthy of it.

Personally, and morally, when they are installed in their office, their subsequent course shows that all they have done is to bring reproach upon the office that they fill. [00:10:02] And what we are going to be occupied with now is the fact that the Lord Jesus is altogether worthy of the office that he fills. He is altogether worthy to be Lord and Christ.

And we're going to consider the well-known verses in Philippians 2 in this connection.

And we might notice, first of all, that these statements about the Lord Jesus are brought before us as part of an exhortation. That the mind that was in him when he came down might be the mind that is in us while we are in this sea. [00:11:14] And it shows us, too, I think, that the way that this is achieved, the way that God accomplishes these things in us, is by occupying us with the person in whom these things were seen perfectly. And that is most important because what is subjective in us always and only flows from what is objective, from being occupied with the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. [00:12:01] In an overview of Philippians 2, we see, first of all, that he had a mind to go down. He made himself of no reputation or emptied himself of his reputation. So that there was nothing that would shout out to everybody around him, I am God.

I am the thrice holy God who has come down to dwell in the midst of my people. No. He veiled his glory. There was a mind to go down. There was a mind to serve and to take up our cause.

[00:13:02] To humble himself as man, to be obedient, to be obedient even unto death, to be obedient and that unto death and that the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. Well, we'll look at some of these statements carefully. First of all, he is personally worthy to be Lord.

Angels have their being in the form of spirits. That's what Psalm 144 quoted in Hebrews 1 verse 7

tells us. That is their nature.

[00:14:07] We have our being in the form of tripartite creatures. We are body, soul and spirit, as we read in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 23. But the being of the Lord Jesus is and always has been in the form of God.

Now, the English word form may perhaps be open to misunderstanding in that we might suppose it conveys the idea of the outward appearance of something, an outline, whilst lacking in a substance, in a reality. [00:15:06] But the word for form, or the underlying word in the Greek that is translated by the English word form, includes the whole nature and essence of deity and is inseparable from it. W.E. Vine, his exposition of Bible words.

And this word safeguards the full deity of the Lord Jesus because there are those in the Old Testament, angels and leaders in the nation of Israel, who are actually called gods. [00:16:01] Where the word for God is used. And it was appropriate for them to be called gods because they were God's representatives. But the use of this word form shows us clearly that the Lord Jesus is not merely God's representative, but that he is God in the fullest sense of the word. If you read John's Gospel chapter 8, I think it's verse 35, where Felt was found with the Lord Jesus because he was claiming to be God. And he said to those that questioned this, well, there were those in the Old Testament who were called gods, who were only men, and you're quibbling with the one whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, that I say I am God. [00:17:12] In other words, this name is applied in the Old Testament to creatures. And yet I, who am really God, and you're arguing that I claim to be God. Hence he thought it not robbery to be equal with God because he is equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And comment is usually made upon the fact that he did not regard it an object to be grasped at, to be equal with God. And the contrast there, the intended contrast, is with Adam and Eve who responded to the temptation of the devil when he said, ye shall be as gods. Disobey God and ye shall be as God. [00:18:19] And they grasped at that. And they fell and became disobedient unto death. Whereas the Lord Jesus, who is equal with God, came down into this world, made himself of no reputation, availing his glory in becoming a servant. And took upon him the form of a servant. Now this is interesting because it's exactly the same word in the Greek that we have higher up for being in the form of God. And took upon him the form of a servant. [00:19:01] And this shows us that he was truly, inwardly, as well as in outward expression, a servant. He was not pretending to be a servant. He was a real servant in inward attitude as well as outward expression. And then we have two statements made in connection with his humanity which carefully safeguard the truth of his person. The first, in the likeness of men, emphasises the fact that he is truly a man but that is not all he is. Because in becoming a man, in taking humanity, in becoming incarnate, he did not for a moment cease to be God. [00:20:07] He did not cease to be what he had always been. And so it's important to bear this in mind. And secondly, he was found in fashion as a man. And this statement emphasises the reality of his humanity. He was body, soul and spirit. That is what was begotten in the womb of the Virgin by the Holy Spirit. And that is what is referred to in Psalm 2 when the Psalmist says, This day have I begotten thee. He was the Son. He ever was the Son. But a moment came in time when he was begotten. And Acts chapter 13 shows us unmistakably that this begetting was in connection with his being raised up according to promise in the midst of the nation of Israel. [00:21:21] But in fashion as a man emphasises his human form, inward as well as outward, bearing language, action, mode of life. So we've seen that as God manifests in flesh, he is personally worthy to be Lord. Personally worthy to be entrusted with supreme divine authority.

[00:22:05] And in the next few verses in Philippians chapter 2, we are occupied with the fact that he is

morally worthy to be entrusted with this authority. He humbled himself.

He always took the lowest place. And it was a characteristic of his teaching, wasn't it, that he showed and taught the disciples that they should do likewise in this matter. He insisted upon it in relation even to the place where he and they were to sit. If they were bidden to a wedding, he says, you don't take the first place. [00:23:15] You take the least place in relation to his service. He that would be chief, let him be servant of all. And we see that, of course, throughout our Lord's life in this world. I've just picked out the occasion when he girded himself with the linen towel and washed the disciples' feet and taught them that they should do likewise. He didn't force himself or his teaching on anyone. And it says in Isaiah, verse 42, verse 2, that this would be one of the characteristics of Jehovah's servant. [00:24:14] He shall not cry nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. That's the wording in Matthew 12, 19. The wording I've given you there is the actual wording in Isaiah 42, verse 2. And he accepted his rejection. He didn't kick against it for a moment. He actually thanked God, his Father, Lord of heaven and earth, the one in whose hands the disposal of all things is. He gives thanks to the Father because he knew that the ordering of his Father was wise and he became obedient. Ears were digged for him. This is the wording in Psalm 40, verse 6, in Hebrews 10, verse 5. [00:25:18] It's translated a body thou hast prepared me. But these two things, ears digged, body prepared, show that the leading thought was that he would be one who heard and obeyed. This was the very principle that was to govern his life when he was here in this world. And we can go through the references. His ear was opened morning by morning. There was this constant hearing of the Father's voice and obedience to the Father. And he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. He learned what it was to obey God in a world that is so contrary to him. [00:26:20] He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And we can see what this cost him as we contemplate him in the Garden of Eden.

Gethsemane. And we remember his strong crying and his tears there, praying that if it were possible, the cup might pass from him, but he was obedient. [00:27:09] And we see in Romans 5, verse 19, and in many other places, that his one act of obedience had consequences for many, many others. And this course that he took and his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, were his moral glory. And that's what he's referring to when he says, now is the Son of Man glorified. Because his obedience had been fully tested, fully put to the proof. And his obedience was found to be perfect. And he was shown to be morally peerless, none that could be compared to him.

[00:28:17] So, his faithfulness to God has taken him into death. But God's faithfulness to Christ has brought him out from among the dead and highly exalted him, given him a name which is above every name. And this exaltation takes place because this is a constant divine principle that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, the Lord said. [00:29:01] God inevitably will intervene for those in subjection to him and in obedience to his word, go down and down and down. God in his own time will come in to lift such and one up. Selfish and perfect service has been completed. Isaiah 52 and 53 again show us how God comes in to answer the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus and his perfect service. And we've seen already that he was morally perfect and God has glorified him in himself, has exalted him, given him a name, a name of renown that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. [00:30:08] And this is an interesting statement because it embraces within it every responsible creature that has ever existed is going to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

We as Christians and the godly before the Christian era began on the day of Pentecost have always had that privilege of bowing to God, of bowing to the Son of God and of confessing that he is Lord. [00:31:02] But of course there are those who refuse his claims as we have seen and they too are going

to bow the knee and bow it to the name of Jesus. The name that he bore when he was here in this world. The name that was his in the time of his humiliation. The name by which he was known when he was rejected. The name that was on the superscription above the cross. This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. At that name every knee is going to bow and in that way acknowledge his personal glory. And every tongue will also confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. There may be the idea that those who refuse to accept the Lord Jesus in their lifetimes will simply be compelled by divine power to bow the knee to him. [00:32:21] But that isn't the idea at all underlying this word confess which is the outcome of deep conviction of facts. The outcome of inner conviction. And there isn't a creature that will not bow the knee to the Lord Jesus and confess him as Lord other than out of this deep inner conviction. One cannot then be in the presence of the Lord Jesus and not feel, not be convicted inwardly of the fact that he is worthy to be Lord. He is rightly made Lord by God the Father. [00:33:18] I'll hand over to the next speaker.