

No Greater Love-Part 5
Stubborn Rejection
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Well, we've been hearing a lot, sadly these days, about "her" truth and "his" truth and "their" truth and "our" truth. Well, in the words of the Christian philosopher, the late Christian philosopher, Francis Schaeffer, when it comes to us as Christians, all that really should matter to us is "true" truth. That's all that should matter, being an adjective that's the adjective you need. True truth. You see because as philosophers and lexicographers and parents have been saying for millennia, to say that something is true, is to assert a correspondence with reality. To say that something is true, what you're saying is you're asserting that there is a correspondence with that statement and actual factual reality.

So you can't have a body of truth you call "historical truth" and a different conflicting body of truth you call "religious truth" then another conflicting body of truth you call your "personal truth" and then, within that, you've got "his" truth and "her" truth. That's just absurd language. I mean, you enter into Alice in Wonderland, it's nutty, you live in a world, to put it in the words of Marilyn Monroe, who I don't quote often, she famously said in an interview when she was asked about God she says, "Well, I believe in everything, a little bit."

Now, I suppose that's cute because of who said it but frankly it's just stupid. I mean, that's just dumb. You can't believe in everything just a little bit. I mean, it just doesn't make any sense. I mean, that's a biblical word, by the way, stupid, if your parents are upset about that. Twelve times in the Bible it's used. Pick a word, I don't know, dumb, does that work for you? It's dumb. It's just a dumb thing to say. You can't have that. Because when someone says something is true, you should not believe it if it is not in keeping with reality. If it doesn't correspond with the facts. That's really our concern. It's certainly the Bible's concern. And there are a lot of truth claims being made in the Bible and, particularly, let's talk about the focal point of the Bible, Jesus Christ makes a lot of truth claims about himself. And the people of his day took those truth claims seriously.

And it left them with one of two choices. Either we believe it or we don't believe it. Either it's true or it's false. Either it corresponds with reality or it doesn't correspond with reality. And as a matter of fact, it was those truth claims that put Jesus in the precarious position that he's in, in our study of Luke Chapter 22 today. And if you haven't had your Bibles open yet, please open them up to Luke 22, as we reach verse 66, we'll study verses 66 through 71 where Jesus now finds himself bound and beaten, bloodied for sure, as he stands before this group of people known as the Sanhedrin, filled with the chief priests and the leaders and the elders and the scribes and the Pharisees and they're all there. A body of 70 of them meeting in a room just off of Solomon's Portico there at the front on the top of the Temple Mount, and as they're meeting there for an official trial, finally it has dawned, morning has dawned, because the Sanhedrin is not supposed to meet, at least officially, and adjudicate on anything unless it's daytime. So there's a lot going on during the night. They had some preliminary hearings and all the rest, with Ananias and Caiaphas. We finally got to the place where dawn breaks in verse 66 and Jesus is now there and they're concerned with his assertions. "What are you asserting about yourself?"

And that's what's happening here in this scene. Every single one of those, 70 of these folks, presided over by the chief Chief Priest. Historically, his name is Joseph Caiaphas, whose tomb, by the way, speaking of historical truth, was found less than 30 years ago by archaeologists in Israel. The Caiaphas family tomb.

That figure presided over a group of people who had to make a decision, they had to draw a conclusion. They had to make a verdict on the claims that Jesus was making, just like everyone in this room has to draw a conclusion. You have to give a verdict. What is your verdict on what Jesus says about himself? And everyone in our culture and everyone at your office and everyone in your extended family and everyone in our community and everyone in the world, who is confronted with the claims of Christ, has to make a decision. And the decision that's made here, as you see and of course you know the story, is pivotal in the drama of the Passion week.

Take a look at this text with me beginning in verse 66 as we read, "When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together." Read here, the Sanhedrin, that was the name of them. "Both the chief priests and the scribes." They are all there, 70 of them, 71 if you count the chief priest. "And they lead him away to the council and they said, 'If you are the Christ, tell us.'" Oh man, it reminds me of my state senator here in a hearing recently, and I don't mean to get political, but she is a political figure, who asked a question that was so ridiculously dumb, it garnered a facepalm and a response of, "Yes, yes! That is precisely what I'm affirming. That is exactly what I'm saying. It's like have you not been listening the whole time, hours here. Yeah, yeah. What you're saying is exactly what I've been saying. Where have you been?" Like, Dahhh...

And Jesus is now being asked a simple question. "So tell us, are you the Christ?" You want to talk about a facepalm moment - that's the whole point. Right? That's been the entire point of this. And so now it's there. "Now affirm it. Now officially affirm it. Tell us." Right? Now Mark gives us the summary that in essence..., now again, this is just a quick brief recording of some of the things that Jesus said in this scene. But in essence here's how Mark summarized it. He said, "Yes," I mean, he affirms it "Yes, that's true." And in this case, it's not that we need that one statement there but certainly it was there in the affirmative.

But he says, "Listen, here's the problem with me even affirming it before you. If I tell you, you won't believe. And if I ask you, if I want to start asking you, 'What do you believe that I am, who do you say that I am?' You're not going to answer me." We have already been through that in Jesus' ministry. "But now, the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." There is a synopsis of what Jesus said. And by the way, we learn of the other Gospels he added this phrase, "And you'll see him coming on the clouds of heaven." A clear reference to Daniel Chapter 7 as we'll see, which basically gets us into a new phase of this.

"OK, wait a minute. The Christ is one thing. So are you saying now, if you're kind of identifying yourself with this Son of Man figure from Daniel 7, are you saying... are you the Son of God?" Then again another facepalm. "What are you talking about. Of course."

Now there's an interesting Hebrew idiom, an Aramaic idiom, a Greek, you know, stated phrase here that reads funny in our English. "You say that I am." Well, you think, well that's a weird response. It is kind of like, you know, because it's a dumb question, these were dumb questions because these were clearly already answered, repeatedly. In essence we could read in English like, "Well, you said it!" Right? "You said it. Of course. Yes." Then they said, there's no communication breakdown here, "What further testimony do we need? We've heard it ourselves from his own lips." He's now committed what Mark 14 says is blasphemy, you've just blasphemy.

Now, Luke doesn't employ that word because he already employed the word in verse 65 about the reality of them taking Christ, who is God, and putting him on the bottom shelf and he's saying they

blasphemed him by treating him the way that they did. But of course, the real charge against Jesus was blasphemy, which is you, as it was often said throughout the Gospels, are making yourself out to be equal with God. That's what this whole phrase is about, "Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power of God." And are you saying, you know, you're the Son of God? I know we toss these words around from an American western perspective but we need to understand them in context, which we'll attempt to do this morning.

In light of that let me, as silly as this sounds, let me be the counselor here as we assemble as those who must pass a verdict on what Jesus is asserting. Let me guide you through this concept with the time we have, we don't have a five-hour service, you don't need to say amen to that. I wish we did some time because there's so much material we could go through. But let's just, in the time that we have, just try to come to some conclusions about this as best we can with the time available to us. Let me start with the first conclusion, because it's broken down into two parts, verses 66 and 67, and verses 69 through 71, deals with the two aspects. One is about the Christ and then one is about Son of God. So let's tear these up in two sections and deal with them independently.

The first one, let's just ask that question and answer it. Right? They come together as the assembly, the Sanhedrin, the chief priests and scribes, they lead him away to the council and they said, "If you are the Christ tell us," and he's basically saying "Well, you guys wouldn't believe me if I told you." Of course he's already told them. And even in Mark's summary of this Jesus is obviously affirming that. So let me state in the affirmative what's already given to us in the Gospels and see if we can't build this up and make sense of it ourselves.

Number one on your outline, let's just get the conclusion upfront, at least the one I would like to lead you to affirm. Number one, you need to affirm that Jesus Christ is the Christ. Right? So "Affirmed Jesus as The Christ." Jot that down if you would. Number one, affirm Jesus, this person, this historical figure, who stands before the Sanhedrin, that the answer is, "Yes." Affirm him as the Christ. He is the Christ. He is the Christ. Now what does that mean? Well two words that are very important. One is the word "the" the definite article "the," THE Christ and the other one is "Christ." And before we can get to "the" let's deal with "Christ." What is Christ?

Well, Christ is a transliterated word from Greek. The New Testament is written in Greek. You're basically rendering in English the word "Christos." Christos then comes to the English "Christ." OK? So that's no translation. That's just saying it in English, an anglicized way to say the word Christos. You go to the Old Testament you'll find the word "Mashiach" in Hebrew. The language of the Old Testament is Hebrew. Hebrew Mashiach. And if you were to take that and kind of anglicize that and say it the way we would say it in English, we'd say Messiah. So we know Messiah - Mashiach, Christos -Christ. That hasn't helped us. Now what we need to do is translate the word. Now if you take the word and you find it in sections of the Bible where it tries to translate that word you get this word, "anointed." Anointed doesn't help us much, you might as well say Messiah or Christ because we don't use that word much in our day. Anointed.

Let's get it in context and figure out what it means in a simplified, kind of pedantic everyday, practical, pragmatic way that the word is used. OK? Number one, in the Old Testament, I'll give you three examples. One is from Isaiah 21. In Isaiah 21 it speaks of the soldiers and the warriors in the army taking their shields, which they used to cover with a layer of leather, and they would take oil to it, like a kid does with a baseball glove, and they would oil their shields. OK? So that picture there of oiling, that verb there, is to anoint. Right? To anoint. The shield then would be the Mashiach, the anointed thing in this case.

A house. In Jeremiah 22 it speaks of the houses and it's dealing with their issues and arrogance and all the rest, and that vermilion is the color and it talked about the fact that you're painting your house in this ostentatious color. Nevertheless, the point is you are painting your houses and that word "painting," that's the word anointed. So the house in that case would be an anointed house. But what it is, clearly, it's putting paint from your jar that you stir up with the dyes in it and you bring into your house and you slather it on your house with brushes, you know, or parts of bushes and things like that, that you'd use as brushes in the ancient world, and you'd paint your house with a coat of vermilion paint in that passage.

Amos 6. In Amos 6 it talks about the people who are rich and they are using in their kind of... context doesn't matter in this case, but the point is they're putting on lotions, their cosmetics and they put them on. They put them on their bodies, in that case they would be anointed, the verb to put it on, to smear it on, to rub it on, to pour it on their bodies. In the New Testament, Christos, used in a non-Jesus way, we got some examples of that as well. Jesus talks about putting oil on your face and on your hair, on your head, oil, and talks about refreshing yourself and you put oil through your hair and on your head, Matthew 6. That picture of putting oil on is the verb, it's the verb to "krino" it, to put it on, like Christos. If I put it on my head then my head would be anointed, anointed with the oil. Which has nothing to do with anything ceremonial in the Bible, certainly not with Jesus, it is just the picture of putting oil on your head or your face.

Luke 7, long time ago we dealt with the perfume that was put on Christ. He was anointed with this perfume. Right? It's like you putting on something that smells good. That picture of scene, a lot going on in the passage in Christological application, but the point is she's just putting it on his body. James Chapter 5, which is reminiscent of the story Jesus told about the Good Samaritan who gets injured and the guy bandages him up, the Samaritan, and puts oil on his body. To put that on, that's the verb to put on the oil on an injured part of your body, to rub it on, you've got a cut in that case, maybe you got stabbed on the road to Jericho, so you're putting on the bandages, but before you do, you kind of put on the salve, you put on the medicinal liquid or oil. All of those verbs are "to slather on" "to rub it on" "to pour it on." That's what the word means.

And once you have that put on then that's the Messiah or the Christ. Now, that doesn't help us because you are all anointed this morning because you probably slathered something on, shampoo on your hair, whatever, lotion on your hands, whatever, you are anointed, but that's not what we're talking about in the Bible when we're talking about the things that pertain to Christ and his claim.

We can go back to the Old Testament and see that the oil was used in a symbolic way to set things apart for a particular purpose. Like the Tabernacle, when it was made the elements or the furniture in the Tabernacle were said that you must anoint them for that purpose and they would take oil and literally anoint it symbolically, like that piece of furniture they put the shewbread on to kind of represent the fact that God has provided our food, our daily bread, and they would put it on the table but the table first had to have oil put on it, a very special oil that was like a fragrance and has special ingredients in it. And you'd say, OK, this table is just for the shewbread only. So if a priest said, "Wow, that table's the perfect size. It would be great in my study. I'm going to pull that out of the tabernacle." No, you can't do that. That's just for that purpose.

The candelabra. Right? You've got to take the candlestick and you have to anointed with oil, so you just use it for that. If you lose your keys to your camel or whatever, you can't just grab the candelabra out of the Tabernacle and go hunting for it at night. You can't use it for that, it's not a

flashlight. It's only for ceremonial purposes. And so it's set apart, all the furniture and the place and the tent itself called the Tabernacle, for spiritual religious purposes and therefore it became a sanctuary, coming from Hebrew into Latin and then into, you know, the word sanctuary in our language, it's set apart and it's set apart for special use.

Some of you sometimes mistakenly call this room a sanctuary. Well, it's really not a sanctuary because we use it for a lot of things that we take the chairs out, do all kinds of things, the Junior Highers put inflatables in here and crazy things you probably don't want to know about, you know, beating each other up. So it's not a sanctuary in that sense because it's not set apart for one purpose, one religious spiritual purpose, it's set apart for a ton of things so it's really not a set-apart room. So it's not a sanctuary in that sense.

Well, not only are things said to be anointed in a symbolic way to say it's got a special religious purpose. There are people who are set apart by God for a special religious purpose. And the first group of people we see in the Bible are the prophets, at least in terms of how I'm going to list them, the prophets who speak for God. Now, you can go to the airport seminar in the ancient world, if you will, ha-ha, an anachronistic joke, and you can go there for the seminar and they can teach on a lot of things and they're not anointed. Right? But if you want to go to church, so to speak, you want to go to a synagogue where someone is standing up and speaking God's revelatory truth, well he better be anointed prophet.

That has nothing to do with his charisma, his dynamism or how good his sermons are. It means this guy is speaking biblical truth. This guy's bringing God's information to you. He's a prophet. And so it was, like in Elijah's ministry in First Kings Chapter 19, he takes that oil and he pours it on Elisha and you have this picture, in that case, I think it was Elisha in that passage. It may be Elijah. Let me just get that straight, look it up, you'll send an e-mail, I know. You have the anointing, which means this guy's in the crew, he's in the prophetic group.

The priests, back to the beginning when the first time we have reference to it, you are to anoint not only the furniture in the Tabernacle but anoint the people who are going to serve as priests in the Tabernacle. So we're going to set apart these ministers, start with Aaron and his sons, and you going to put the oil that is specially made, that I told you how to make, and pour it on their head and anoint them, like paint on a house or like oil on your face, shampoo on your head, like medicine on your cut. That is an anointing. But it's a special anointing that says this guy now is not going to own property in Israel, he's not going to be a mechanic, he's not going to be, you know, whatever, an accountant, a tax collector. He is going to be a minister. That's his job.

And then of course there was the king. The first king that Israel ever had, God took Samuel and said, "You know that anointing oil that we use, we use it for prophets, we use it for priests, you're going to go and take that and we're going to anoint the king." And so they go to Saul, he's the first king, a big tall guy, and they put oil on his head in a ceremony and he becomes the king. Then God said, "OK you had your pick. I mean I picked him for you but he's the ideal king in your mind. Now I'm going to pick a man after my own heart." So they go to Jesse's house and you know they bring a little runt out of the field, he's watching the sheep and it's David and he goes through the same thing again, he takes the oil and he pours it on his head. That picture of pouring the oil.

And what did that mean? That means in the Old Testament if you were a priest you could say you were a Christ, to use a New Testament word. You were an anointed one you were a messiah, you were a messiah, but that's where "the" is starting to get here into play.



They're not asking are you a priest or are you a prophet or are you a king? Now all of a sudden we have the word are you THE Christ. What, are you THE Christ? Yeah. Because those three very important special people in the Bible, the roles in the offices of prophet, priest, and king, are you THE prophet? Where would they ever come up with that? Because all the Old Testament prophecies began to take all these roles and tie them into one. I mean we see this... think of 1,000 years before Christ in the prophecy about the Melchizedekian priesthood. Here's a picture of a king who is a priest back from Genesis and now there's this promise that is going to be one who you're going to see merge together and that passage, the priest and the king and they are going to be one.

Well, of course, the prophet too, if you look at all the prophecies there's going to be a great one who not only speaks authoritatively for God, but he's the ultimate authoritative spokesman, he's the ultimate prophet. Now we have the ultimate priest who's going to come, it says in Psalm 53, our Daily Bible Reading this morning, and we're going to present this one to God as a sacrifice and he will represent, not with an animal sacrifice, but with his own body being crushed as a guilt offering for people and he'll make people right before God. So you have God speaking to the people through the ultimate prophet, and we have the people being represented before God to the ultimate priest, and then we'll have the ultimate king and he will be the leader, authoritatively, shepherding over all the people of the earth and that will be the ultimate king. We need an ultimate king, ultimate priest, ultimate prophet. The ultimate prophet, priest and king. Are you that? Because the prophets in the Old Testament keep talking about the ultimate prophet, the ultimate priest and the ultimate king. Are you that guy from the Old Testament? That's the question that is on the table.

The first thing I think you got to say to the skeptical 21st century people of our world is that God has the ability to do this and record it in the Scripture. He's always underscoring that in the Bible, "I am calling this before it happens." Jot down a few references if you would under this first point. Jot down Isaiah 46:9 and 10. There are many passages I could give you but Isaiah 46:9 and 10. God likes to say this: "One way you can know that I am God is that I can tell you the end from the very beginning. I can tell you," this is a great line, "I can tell you from ancient times things that haven't happened yet, saying, 'My counsel will stand, and I will accomplish my purpose.'" In other words, the feature you should see about biblical truth, the assertion about the reality in the present, is that God is able to assert things about the future that come to pass factually and historically and because of that you should know, "You can trust my words." And he's delivered that information. Amos Chapter 3 verse 7. He delivered that information to his prophets and his prophets then bring that to the people.

Here's how it's put, "The Lord does nothing without revealing his secrets to his servants the prophets," and the prophets speak and there it's recorded. A great passage. A great passage. I hate to double up on this one because I just want one for each, but I got to give you two. John 12:41, when Jesus is dealing with the very passage we read in our Daily Bible Reading this morning in Isaiah 53, he quotes it, he quotes Isaiah 6, and then he says this. He says the reason this can happen is because Isaiah, he said these things, he wrote these things, because he saw Christ's glory and he spoke of Christ. So, 700 years before Christ came, he's saying Isaiah saw it in this revelatory expression of God giving it to the mind of the prophet, and he wrote about it. So God took the secrets of the Messiah, gave them to the prophets, the prophets recorded them and we have these documents. And that's why in Romans Chapter 1, Paul can come on the scene and say all this stuff about Christ, it was all promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures concerning his Son.

Now we know this about the Bible, it's filled with predictive prophecies that are very exacting. One

of the biggest things about the Old Testament is, you know what, your kings aren't going to be good. They're going to be imperfect. They're not going to satisfy. Your priest, they're going to be inadequate. Never give you enough sacrifices to do anything for you morally or your spiritual needs before God. Right? Your prophets, yeah, you got good information but you really don't have God speaking for himself. So we need an ultimate prophet, we need an ultimate priest, we need an ultimate king and I'm going to send it in one person. You're going to have prophet, priest and king, THE Christ, he's coming and he is the thing you ought to expect. We have so much anticipation in the Old Testament for the coming of THE Christ. Even today, your Jewish friends are expecting, if they're Orthodox, or at least believing the legitimacy of the Old Testament Scriptures, they're waiting for the..., they'll use the Old Testament Hebrew word, the Messiah. They can't wait for the Messiah to come. And they're asking, "Are you the Messiah, are you the Christ, are you that one person?"

Well, the reason we know that we can say that God has set up a template that we can now ask, "Are you the person fulfilling all that," because God is a God of prophetic truth. He speaks it before it happens. Now the question is are you that person? Well, I got to turn you to the passage that's not far from where we're at. After the resurrection, Jesus says this. Turn with me to Luke Chapter 24. If you still have your Bibles open, go from Luke 22 to Luke 24. This is after the death, torture, resurrection of Christ. He's on this road to Emmaus and he says this to these guys who are all like, "People are saying, 'He's alive from the dead,'" and Jesus is there and here's what he says: "What's with you guys? You saw him die, people have seen him now alive, why are you questioning any of this?"

"Oh you foolish ones," this is Luke 24:25, he said to them. "Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Don't you know this is what's recorded in the Old Testament? "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" There are two phases to the Messiah. He comes as a suffering servant and then he's glorified and he takes the throne of the world and becomes the great king of the world. And the problem is, when people think about, "Isn't going to be great when the Messiah comes?" Just like your Jewish friends right now. They think about the greatness of the Messiah, how liberating it will be, how great it will be, unifying everything under the leadership of this one Jewish Messiah. Won't it be great? Well, you've got all these other passages about the suffering of that Messiah. And people like to ignore that. Well he's trying to say don't you know that these two are both part and parcel of who the Messiah is and they look from these two mountaintops, the biblical prophetic statements about Messiah, and they fail to see, and many of our people fail to see, well that's all we have is the suffering servant, well there's a 2,000 year valley, at least so far, 2,000 year valley between those two peaks that are clearly seen in Scripture.

Nevertheless he says, "I know you're all bummed out that, that if this were the Christ, why didn't he liberate Israel? Why didn't we have a great king sitting on a physical throne, in a physical place, in a physical palace, in the physical Jerusalem?" He's saying, "Don't you know you've got to have him suffer first?"

And he starts then, wouldn't you like to be a part of this Bible study, verse 27, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Is there any doubt in this passage that he's saying he is THE Christ? Well you tie it together, verse 26, "Necessary that THE Christ," there's THE Christ, prophet, priest and king, verse 27. "Let me tell you, it's all about me. It's all written about me. I am the focus of all of this in the Old Testament."

Drop down further when he speaks to his inner circle in verse 44 as he commissions them with the Gospel he says this: "These are my words." This is Luke 24:44, "He said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' And then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." This is why you and I are on equal footing when it comes to all those people there. I know they got to see this firsthand, but we have the same Scriptures they had. We get to look in the Old Testament to say what were they expecting and did Jesus fulfill it? "And he opened their minds to understand the Scripture." Here it is. Look. Look. "And he said, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.'" Oh, that's what you just did. So you must be THE Christ. "And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem."

And so it is that in the Bible he is saying I am THE Christ and it's all over the Old Testament. Now I wish we had a five-hour service in some ways, and other ways I don't, but I wish we had a five-hour service right now because we could start at the very beginning. We could go to Genesis 3 and look at the first reference to some kind of overcoming of the problem that happened in Genesis 3. Then we could go to Genesis 12 and Genesis 15 and Genesis 17 and we could look at God saying through Abraham is going to come someone, this "seed" that's going to come, not only through the woman but through Abraham now, and we're going to have the blessing to all the world's going to come through one descendant of Abraham. And then to the end of the book, in Chapter 49 in Genesis, you then have the 12 sons of Jacob, we've got one son here and Judah is going to be the one and through Judah you're going to see that scepter, the ultimate king, is going to come from him. It will never depart from Judah.

And so now we're already starting to get down to very specific things. But by the time we get to near the end of the Old Testament in the book of Micah, which by the way is still 686 years before Christ, we start saying, not only will he be from David but he's going to be born in that little dusty village that David was born in, he's going to be born in Bethlehem, this one who comes from old, whose pre-existent and he's going to be born in that in that village. And then Daniel Chapter 9, which still, by the way, in Daniel Chapter 9 is several centuries before Christ. This is 535. The only reason people try to date this later is because the prophecies in it are so exacting. But in 535 B.C. Daniel now pins the reality of a prophecy that dates when Christ will come into the triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. And while there's some debate about when that all starts historically it's going to put us in a window between 30 A.D. and 33 A.D. when Christ comes and presents himself in Jerusalem riding on a donkey and even in Zachariah 9 it tells us how he's going to come. On the fold of a donkey, not on a white charger, not on a camel, he's going to come on this young colt and he's going to walk through the cities and the gates of Jerusalem. And as it says in the psalms, the gates are going to open up and the Lord himself is going to come in. How can that be? How can he walk through the gates? He must be in human form.

Prophecy after prophecy, including the one this morning, if you haven't read your Daily Bible Reading that we're following all along in our church, and you don't do in the morning, do it this afternoon. If you haven't done it at all, get that reading schedule on the back of that worksheet and start working through it because we're in a great section. We just read Colossians Chapter 1, which I read for you here in the service and now today we deal with Isaiah 53, 54 and 55. In Isaiah 53, look at those statements about Christ, they're all over the place, about how he dies, about his resurrection, about that he's going to prosper in the hand of God after his own death. That his grave is going to be with the rich. He's going to be crucified with the criminals and the dejected ones.

These are great passages and all you have to do is read, read, read, read, read and you say, Christ fulfilled it all. Not to mention the typologies of the Scripture, from the festivals to the furniture in the temple and the Tabernacle, Christ is the fulfillment of it all. That should get you excited. If we had five hours we'd go through a lot more of it but, here, to fill up your other four hours, let me put this on your reading list on the back. Look at some of those titles there on the back of your worksheet. Pick one. The bookstore has probably sold out by now because I've done this to the other services today and last night, but find a book that deals with the Messiah, the Messiah coming, the prophecies of the Messiah, how Christ fulfills the messianic promises and prophecies of the Old Testament and then ask yourself the question: "Jesus, are you the Christ?" He says, "Dirr... yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm the Christ. That's the point. The whole Old Testament is about me. It's about me."

And get impressed with that because the God of the universe has the ability to record in Scripture and then, by the way, put a bookmark in it and a pin in it for 400 years before the New Testament starts. Why do you think God put a bow on the Old Testament and said no more new revelation until John the Baptist and Jesus get born? Why is that? Because he wanted to make very clear, none of the things in the Old Testament were written after the things in the New Testament. So you can clearly have every skeptic in your life see it and read it that Jesus is THE Christ.

"Are you claiming to be the Messiah? Emphatically, yes. That's emphatically what I'm saying." To quote the headlines, "that is emphatically what I've been saying." And then he adds this phrase. "But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." And again, Mark 14:62 adds the phrase and with the clouds of heaven, "coming with the clouds of heaven."

That picture of clouds and the Son of Man takes us to the second question that comes on the heels of that statement when Caiaphas asked the question, "So are you the Son of God? Are you the Son of God, then?" And Jesus says, "You said it. Yep." "And they said, 'What further testimony do we need?'" And as the other Gospel writers tell us, the high priest, which is a complete, utter no-no, a prohibition, he tears his robes, an egregious thing to do. But he thought, "This is so outrageous. You've heard it for yourselves," as Mark adds, "the blasphemy from his lips."

Well, he sure got worked up about that. "Son of God? What's the big deal, we're all sons of God, aren't we? I call myself a son of God. Son of man, well of course I'm a son of a man, I look just like a man, I was born of a man. My father sired me." That's not the point here. And when people come to your door kind of downplaying these phrases, these are gigantic phrases and what are they basically asserting? Here's what they're asserting. The first thing we're asserting is that Jesus is THE Christ.

The second thing we're asserting is that we should honor Christ as God. Let's just make it as simple as we can on our outlines. Christ is God. And you should "Honor Christ as God." Let's go back to Daniel 7. Once you write that down, I've got to take you to Daniel 7. I got to turn you to a few passages in this. Because not only your Jewish friends saying, "I don't think he's the Messiah," well we got our homework to do to make it very clear. He claimed to be the Messiah. And he is the Messiah. "Well, yeah, but to say your God, I mean, that seems kind of blasphemous and maybe this Trinity thing is crazy. Maybe he was just a good prophet like all of Islam says, just a good prophet but he certainly is not God, that's blasphemy." Is he God, really?

Let's go back to this claim about coming on the clouds, the Son of Man. Daniel Chapter 7. Find that

Old Testament passage in Daniel Chapter 7. A huge claim, written before the year 500 B.C. We have a statement here that comes in two parts, interrupted by a discussion about, really it's not an interruption because it's the context, talking about this great leader who will come. Remember how the book started with the vision of Nebuchadnezzar that Daniel interprets about the head, that's Babylon and you've got the Medo-Persians who come afterwards, and you've got Greece, but, you know, as we move down the statue, and then we've got Rome and then we've got this weird kind of weird feet that are all broken up into ten toes with clay and iron and all that.

All of that statue of all the successive empires of the world, then you have a big rock that comes from heaven, not chiseled or hewn out by human hands and it comes down and smashes this whole image of human governments. You have this thing, this new rock, this kingdom that comes and establishes itself and displaces all the others. And just like it says in Revelation 11, "The kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our Lord God and of Christ and that Christ reigns forever."

Well, here's the picture of the Christ. It starts with the Ancient of Days, the God of the universe sitting on a throne with this apocalyptic literature, which when I say apocalyptic I'm using that in a sense in terms of biblical genres, which is not a sense of in the end times. I know we always think of apocalypse as the end times. Apocalyptic means that we're pulling back the curtain and with a lot of symbolism we're picturing something that can't be literally envisioned that way because God has no hands, no feet, no eyes, no hair, and yet there's a picture of that. It's an apocalyptic image, revelatory image in Scripture. And it here comes, verse 9.

Daniel says, "As I looked..." That's how apocalyptic texts are. They're people seeing things like John throughout the book of Revelation, and then describing them, which represent realities. "I looked, and there were thrones, they were placed there, and the Ancient of Days took his seat." Right? "The Ancient of Days." That's the phrase even from Micah 5:2 about the one coming from the Ancient of Days, born in Bethlehem. But here it is, God, the Father, in his throne and in "his seat; and his clothing was white like snow, and his hair," which he has no hair, this is a symbolic picture of God, "his hair was like pure wool; and his thrones were fiery flames; and its wheels were burning fire." There's that Ezekiel 1 and 2 picture of this weird scene in heaven. "A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and then ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him and the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened." So this is some special meeting in the board room of heaven.

And then the picture, which was the topic at hand, about these rebels who will take leadership of the world, he says, "I looked and I saw the sound of great words of that horn that was speaking." Horn - this leader. "And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body was destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time," which is code throughout Daniel of a time period of this time of rebellion before the kingdom gets set up.

Verse 13. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven," there's a key phrase Jesus quoted at this scene before the Sanhedrin as he is bound and bloodied, "there came one like a son of man," there's the phrase, "and he came to the Ancient of Days." So, we've got the Father on this throne. Now we got one that looks like a human being. He's not all weird in this apocalyptic symbolism, he looks like a human being. "And he comes and he's presented before the Father, before the Ancient of Days. And to him," now this is blasphemy if you do not believe in the Trinity, "to him was given dominion and glory."

So he's got sovereignty and "Kavod" in Hebrew, kavod. He's got all the gravitas and all the weight of divinity and he's presented before him and with all this dominion and glory. And then he gets a kingdom, "A kingdom which all peoples, all nations, all languages should," here's something you shouldn't do, you should serve only the Lord your God. Serve him only. That's what we started with in the law on Sinai, only serve him. Worship and serve him only. Oh no, no, now we're going to serve this one like a Son of Man. That sounds like worship and one thing Jews are very particular about, you're not going to worship anyone but God. Serve him. Who should serve him? "All peoples, all nations, all languages." Even Hebrew speaking Jews should do that? Yes, exactly! Why? "Because his dominion is an everlasting dominion." Is this for a time, a proxy, a little band-aid on leadership on the earth? No. It's forever, "Which shall not pass away and his kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed." So something is going to replace all human government, all human leadership. It's a kingdom with a leader and he's like a son of man and he comes before God and God says I now give you all dominion, all glory, all honor, everyone is to serve you and be your subject.

Now you're standing here bound and bloodied as some Galilean "son of a carpenter," and they're asking you when you start quoting Daniel 7, "Are you the Son of God?" And they know exactly what they mean by that. Because he's about to say, "If you answer yes to this I'm tearing my robes and calling you a blasphemer." And how would that be such a violent response? Because to say you were the Son of God is not like when you and I say we're sons and daughters of God. That's not what he means. Jesus is making himself, as they often said when the Jews said to him in the book of John, "You call God your Father making yourself equal with God. What's the point? You are now saying, Father like Son, you have all the dominion, all the glory, all the gravitas, all the kavod, people should serve you like they serve God. That's crazy talk." And for Joseph Caiaphas, it was crazy talk. That's exactly what Jesus was claiming.

A couple more passages, I've got to turn you to the New Testament. Go to John Chapter 5. I know they're gonna knock on your door and try and argue with you about John 1:1, which is absurd, but they'll try to confuse you. Let me be very clear about all the cult groups that deny the divinity of Christ. This passage is one of several, but I just picked one for the sake of our short service here. Verse 21. Let's start there.

Three simple observations. Jesus, red-letters, here's what he says, "As the Father raises the dead and gives them life..." Now that's so clear in the Bible, Job 33:4, God is the giver of life. He gives people the breath of life. He is the giver of life, the originator of life, the creator of life, the sustainer of life. Who does that? Ask anyone in Sabbath school, who does that? God does that. God, the Almighty God does that. "So also the Son gives life, and I'm giving it to whoever I want." What? Now what are you talking about? I'm not done yet, he says. Verse 22, "For the Father judges no one." Not only do I demonstrate divine attributes of being the life giver and I'm doing this according to my will. Look at this, verse 22, "The Father judges no one." What are you talking about? Psalm 98:9 says that the Father judges the world. "God, the Lord is going to be the judge of the world. He's going to judge the world in righteousness and justice and equity."

No, no, the Father judges no one. Oh, I know the triune God is going to judge the world, but let's be very clear about the persons of the Godhead. He's given all judgment to the Son. "I will be the judge of all the people." You want to talk about blasphemy? There it is. Unless, of course, he's God. Unless, of course, the Son of God is very clear, he's the Son of Man from Daniel 7, who's given now all authority, dominion, all gravitas, all kavod, all glory and he's supposed to be the one who is served by all people. Well, then I guess it makes sense, that as the second person of the Godhead

you are the judge of all the world.

That's why he could say things like we learned it in Luke Chapter 5 verses 20 and 21 that he could look at a guy and say your sins are forgiven and they say he's speaking blasphemy because who can forgive sins? Who's going to condemn? Who's going to justify? Who's going to forgive? Christ is going to do that, at least that's his claim, and yet we know only God can do that because you can't sin against someone and have someone else forgive you unless, of course, they are one. And that's the whole point of Christ's ministry, to say, "That is it. The Father and I are one." He can say to his disciples, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." He fulfills the divine role as judge.

One more, take a look at this, it gets even worse. John 5:23. Lay this one on your Muslim friend right here. Ready? "That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father." That all may honor the Son. It gets stronger in the original language of Greek. Koine Greek says "cursos", equal sign, just as they honor the Father. "So wait a minute, you want all peoples, all nations, all languages to serve this Son of Man the way they would serve the Ancient of Days and honor him? Whoa, you must be equal."

Yeah, as a matter of fact, if you don't honor the Son the way you wanted the Father, you're not honoring the Father who sent him. Because from the Ancient of Days comes this one like a Son of Man and he comes to earth and you are to honor him the way you'd honor the Father. That's why when they say, you know, at formerly, you know, hardline evangelical schools that if, you know, if you worship Allah, it's just God by another name. Right? Same God.

Here's the thing, you're not worshipping God, you're not getting off the starting blocks with worshipping God unless you understand that no one comes to the Father except through Christ. That is clear in Scripture. There's no way around it. If I offend people, I'm sorry, I'm just the messenger delivering mail you don't happen to like. And the bottom line is Christ is the only way. If you do not honor the Son you're making no progress in worshipping the Father. You don't honor the Father. Matter of fact, you're offending the Father if you do not take the Son of Man and recognize that he has dominion, all glory and you are to serve him just like you'd served the Father. The Bible's very clear, God is a jealous God, you don't worship anyone else, you don't serve anyone else.

One more passage. Turned to the end of the Bible, Revelation Chapter 4. In Revelation 4 and 5 we've got a lot of the picture that we had in Ezekiel 1 and 2, a little bit of what we've seen in Daniel 7, this scene in heaven that's filled with these apocalyptic images and symbols of things going on there. But if there's confusion with creatures and eyes and wings and angels and all that, one thing's very clear, who's in charge. Right? There should be no confusion, no ambiguity there.

Look at verse 8. Revelation 4:8. This one is worth looking at. Right? It's worth getting out of bed, come to church. This one, please, this one is super important to look at. Revelation Chapter 4 verse 8. "And the four living creatures, each of them having six wings, full of eyes around and within." Try and draw that. That's hard but nevertheless we some kind of apocalyptic picture of a really bizarre creature, we find him Ezekiel too. Who are they? I'm not sure. The book's going to be really small, you're right on that. It's only speculation, but some big, important, heavenly, high-ranking creature.

"Day and night." Here's one thing that's clear. They know who's in charge. "They never cease to say holy," separate, unique, "holy," separate, unique, "holy," separate, unique, "is the Lord God," now

here's a great word, "Almighty." That rolls off the tongue because you've heard it in church a million times but know what it is saying, mighty, power, almighty, all power. One who has all power. The one who is all power.

Oh, by the way, that one with all power, just for a second, put a pin in this, and just at least write down in your notes or put in the margin of your Bible if you have the old paper Bible, jot down Chapter 1 verse 8, Revelation 1:8. When God says this, the Lord God says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega. I'm the one who was, who is, and is to come." Eternal, and a beginning and end. "The one who is to come, the Almighty," I'm the almighty one, all power. So God defines himself that way, very clearly.

And whenever the people there in heaven do this, take a look at verse 9, whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who seated on the throne forever and ever, no one throws a flag on the play in verse 10. The 24 elders go, "Yeah, absolutely." They fall down before him, who is seated on the throne and they worship him who lives forever and they cast their crowns before the throne and they say, "Worthy are you our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power."

Now if you didn't have Daniel 7 in mind, you'd be like totally clear. You're a great monotheist right now. I get it. Just one God, one person, one God, I get it. One guy is in charge of this heavenly scene here and you should give him all glory and honor. But we're already a little confused because of Daniel 7. But we know this, we're going to clarify who God is, "For you've created all things. And by your will," you decided, "they existed and they were created." He's the creator, dominion, power, glory, honor, everything. We should serve him and honor him. Any confusion about that passage? God the Father. Right? You got God here.

Across the page. Revelation 5. Definitely the scene doesn't end until the end of Chapter 5. And then this heavenly scene that looks a lot like Ezekiel, looks a lot like Daniel 7, you have strange things going on but we get some clarity, just like we did in Daniel 7, that we're not just dealing with the Father, the Ancient of Days, we're dealing with the Son of Man. Take a look at it, Revelation 5:11. "Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands," sounds a lot like Daniel 7, "saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is,'" oh wait, "'the lamb.'" What kind of lamb? "The Lamb who was slain."

Now that's very clear in this in this whole book, even so far. Christ is all about the first chapter. Christ is referenced even in Chapter 4 and 5 here in the heavenly scene, Christ is going to be the focus throughout the rest of Chapter 6 through 19. Christ is going to be the center of Chapter 20 through 22. All of this is a picture of Christ and here we get it very clearly, "The Lamb who was slain." Like John the Baptist saying, "There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." The great High Priest are going to come and make us right before God. Not because he's bringing an animal but because he himself is the lamb that's going to be sacrificed for the propitiation, the satisfaction, of sins. The Lamb who was slain. Any confusion who that is? I think that's clear in the New Testament. Now he's worthy to do what? Oh, it's sounding a lot like Chapter 4, "To receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory," same words from Daniel 7, "and blessing."

By the way, now that we're into Chapter 5, put this in the margin, if you would. Revelation 22, verses 12 and 13. Make this very clear in your thinking, when it comes to the almighty one, who

was, and is, and is to come, at the end of the book, we're now not in black letters anymore, if you have a red letter Bible, you have Jesus speaking in the last chapter of the Bible and he says, "Behold, I'm coming soon." That's the whole point. Christ is coming back. That's what the book of Revelation is all about. "I'm bringing my recompense with me," and then he says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, I am the first and last, I am the beginning and end." Now, wait a minute, you just stole the Father's title, because that's what he said he was.

Well, when in heaven they say, "To the Lamb who was slain, you should get all power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory and blessing. Everyone in heaven," verse 13, they hear this, "everyone in heaven," Oh, "and on Earth," one day. Yep. "And everyone under the earth and everyone in the sea, and all that's in them, they say this, 'To him who sits on the throne,'" that's who we met in Chapter 4, and, here's a conjunction, super important, "'and to the Lamb.'" So I got the one on the throne and then I got the Lamb as slain, seated at the right hand of the Father. So, let's just get this straight now. Everyone is going to say to the Lamb and to the one who sits on the throne, both of these personages now, "Be blessing and honor and glory and might," for how long? "Forever and ever. And the four living creatures said," heresy, in verse 14. No, no, no. They said what? That's right, "Amen!" Their Christology is right on. "And all the elders fall down and worship him."

It's like C.S. Lewis put so masterfully. "You can write him off as a fool." Right? A lunatic. "You can spit on him as a demon." Right? He's a bad, evil blasphemer as Caiaphas did. "Or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God." And I love the way he puts it. "Don't come with any of this patronizing nonsense about him being a good teacher." Or as Islam would put it, a good prophet. Right? "He did not leave that option open to us, nor did he intend to." I love that from a nice stuffy Oxford professor. Right? Enough with this patronizing nonsense that he is not presented in Scripture as God. He presents himself as the Daniel 7 figure who comes from the Ancient of Days, stands and is presented before him, and now everyone is to honor him. You're only to honor God. He must be God. That is so clear to Caiaphas that he tears his clothes and says, "We don't need any more testimony here. We've got all we need to hang this guy on the gallows." Right? Or to put it clearly, to hang him on a Roman execution rack and have him murdered. Why? He's claiming to be God.

Is that any confusion? No, that's being said throughout his ministry. John Chapter 10 verse 30, when he said, "I and the Father are one." The Jews picked up stones exclaiming, "You and the Father are one?" And Jesus said, "I've done a lot of good works. For which good work are you stoning me?" They said, "We're not stoning you for a good work, were stoning you for blasphemy because, you being a man, make yourself out to be God." Now, if I'm sitting back and having any courage, I'm going to raise my hand and say, "Hey guys. Hey Jews, stop, Daniel 7." Clearly this is what we have in Scripture. That's one of many prophecies but that's one.

John Chapter 5, even earlier in his ministry, it says this is why the Jews were persecuting him, not just because he was doing things on the Sabbath, but because Jesus was saying that... I'll just read it for you, verse 18, "The Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, not only because he was breaking the Sabbath, because even he was calling God his own Father." Now that's not like you and I call him Father, "making himself equal to God." He gives life. He controls nature. He assumes divine attributes, he exercises divine authority. He forgives as though he's God. I mean, there are so many things in Scripture.

Don't get lost with the trees when someone comes and tries to talk you out of some singular verse, which by the way they can't. They're not Greek scholars when they come and say that. I'm not just

talking about the cultist at your door, I'm talking about a lot of people, like you and I, that don't like to see Christ as the exalted, eternal God in human form. That's Colossians and I read it in the service this morning when it says so clearly, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." He is God or as Hebrews 1 verse 3 says, "He's the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds everything in the universe by the word of his power." And now "sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high." And, you know what? "We should give all honor, glory, and praise to not only him who sits on the throne, but to the Lamb who is seated at his right hand."

There is no other way. You can create a special category and say, "Well, I don't know, maybe he's Michael the Archangel on steroids or something." I'm telling you, you've got nowhere to go, but to come to the conclusion, let the evidence take you where it should. And yet some people, still, they reject it.

Matter of fact, let's wrap up real quickly, with one minute to go, in verse 67 and 68. When they say, "If you're the Christ, tell us." And he said, "If I tell you, you won't believe." Right? You're not going to believe me. "And if I ask you," who do you think I am, "you're not going to answer." I know how this works. OK? Number three in your outline. Let's "Don't Be Inconvincible." There's a word for you. And you'll glance at the screen and you'll write "inconceivable." That's not the word. Matter of fact, "inconceivable" is what the "inconvincible" often say because this is entirely conceivable. This is conceivable. It is conceivable because God called it in the Old Testament but the inconvincible who say, "Ahhh, I can't be convinced," they're like, "My mind's made up, don't confuse me with the facts."

The problem isn't the information because we've got a ton of it in the Old Testament. All you got to do is read it. The problem is with the willingness to accept it, as Jesus so strategically said in John 7:17, I mean it was such a penetrating ripping away of the facade of these people, he said, "If anyone's will is to do God's will," if you are willing to do what God wants, "then he will know," I've given you enough evidence, "whether the teaching that I'm giving you is from God or whether I'm speaking on my own authority." You'll know. The problem isn't the knowing, it's the willing, and there are a lot of unwilling people.

Jesus, in Luke 20, we studied it not long ago, when they said what gives you the right to knock over all these tables on the Temple Mount? And he said, "Well, I've got a question for you." He answered a question with a question. He said, "What about John the Baptist? Is he a kook or is he a prophet? You tell me." That's a Mike Fabarez paraphrase, but that's the decision he gave: kook or prophet? And they thought, they talked to each other, they counsel, they said, "If we say he's a prophet, well then he's going to say, 'Why didn't you believe him because he's the one saying the one coming after me, I'm not even worthy to untie his sandal, and yet you're the big prophet of the first century, but you're saying there's someone greater than you, that you don't even compare to. 'He's the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.' So you're going to nail me for the illogical response if he's a prophet. But if we say he's a kook, well then, all the people are going to stone us, because everyone really likes John the Baptist. It was clear he was a powerful prophet of God."

So they said, "We're not going to tell you. We don't know." And then Jesus responded, I love this in verse 8, "Well, I'm not going to tell you what authority I have." Now what's the thing? Why is he so obscure? Why doesn't Jesus answer the question forthright? Because the problem is the incredulity of the people. They don't want to believe this and that's the problem.



If you go down the street and say, "Hey, let me just open up the Old Testament guys. This Messiah you're waiting for? It's Jesus Christ." "Hey guys, you're at the door, you're saying Jesus isn't God. Let's open the Bible. He's clearly God." Not only quantitatively but qualitatively providing the sacrifice that applies and covers all of our sins. But they don't want to accept that. Why? Because they don't choose to do it. Why? Because I would say the average non-Christian, at least, would put it this way: it goes back to that passage I read in Daniel 7:14. "So that all the peoples and nations and languages should serve him."

As Jesus said in the parable, a lot of people say, "I don't want that man, I don't want that man to reign over us. I don't want to serve him." It's good for us to think about an invisible God somewhere up there dwelling in unapproachable light, but don't tell me that that Jewish, first century rabbi was God. I don't want to serve him. Most people don't want to serve anyone but themselves and that's really the core problem for so many.

Seeing is not believing. Jesus did a lot of miracles in front of people's face and they did not believe him because they were unwilling. A lot of anger about the Christ who I preached about this morning. If you want a Christ of your own making, you can get a lot of people who will applaud that on YouTube and Twitter and Facebook. That's great. The God of the Bible, who says, "No one comes to the Father except through me," the Christ of the Bible who says very clearly, "I am the Messiah, the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises," the Christ of the Scripture who is God in human form, that's the Christ who most people are pushing to the fringes of society. We don't want to hear from that Christ and we don't want you pushing him.

That reminds me of the irony in London in the 17th century when the bubonic plague hit and was spreading rapidly through the city, the most populous city in Europe, and there they were completely devastated by this horrific pandemic. And unfortunately they had a misplaced hostility because they figured in their logic, which was not good, that the problem must be their domesticated animals, their dogs and cats, were causing the problem. So they systematically went through London and said you got to kill your dog, got to kill your cat. No one should have a dog or cat. So they went around and if you are a pet lover, I'm sorry, you can't be a pet lover. As a matter of fact, if you have a cat, you better not tell anyone about it, you better keep it private because they are after you, man. We got to get those animals out of this city. And they went around doing that.

Now everyone knew there was a problem but they focused the problem on those domesticated animals. Now in our day, by the way, everyone knows there's a problem. Right? You cannot turn on anything, talk radio, can't read a blog, can't read the news without knowing everyone knows the world's on fire. They know it. They just think the problem is, really when it comes down to it, the religious fundamentalists like you and I, particularly Christians. They have misplaced hostility because they've misdiagnosed the problem.

In London in the 17th century, in retrospect after the great pandemic spread and killed millions of people, they recognized the problem wasn't their domesticated animals, it wasn't their cats and dogs, it was the rats. It was the fleas on the rats that were causing the bubonic plague and the delirium and the fever and all these huge lymph nodes that would swell up into some grotesque size in their bodies and kill everybody in excruciating pain. The problem was the rats. And you know what happened when they took those cats and dogs out of the society in London, the explosion of the rat population, which just made this pandemic worse. More people died because they took their hostility and aimed at the wrong place.



Jesus Christ. Jesus, THE Christ, who is God in human form, is not the problem. It's not the problem theologically, it is not the problem in culture. It is the answer theologically and it is the answer for our culture. But you know, for the past 50 years, in America in particular, we've taken Christianity, biblical Christianity, the biblical Christ and we pushed him out of society.

And all it has this done, unfortunately, has made our problem worse. The anger, the angst, the hostility, the frustration, the relativity, you name it, the things going wrong in our world are because of the lack of a biblical teaching of Christ. That's a dark way to end the sermon, but here's the good news: you have an ability to push this disease, if you will, out of your own life, you can stop the plague in your own heart, in your own home, with your children, with your church, your small group and maybe even make some gains in your workplace and in your neighborhood, your extended family.

We got to do our part and affirm that Jesus is the Christ and we need to honor that Christ as God. That's the only option we have. As has been so well said, don't come to us with any of this patronizing nonsense that he was anything less than what he clearly revealed himself to be. Let's stand for good sound Christology, good doctrine in our Christian life this week.

Let's pray. God, give us the ability and the courage to be good ambassadors of you this week. We want to be ready to give an answer for the hope that's in us. It lies within the Scriptures because the Scripture is prophetically called this from the very beginning. You promised beforehand through the prophets in the Scriptures that you were going to send the ultimate prophet, priest and king. And while people like to say, "Yeah, you want to say that. That's your truth, that's your Christian truth. But, you know I got a different truth." God, let us be echoing the wisdom and the logic that all that really matters is "true" truth. And the affirmation of Jesus saying that he was the Christ and that Christ is God, there's no middle ground, he either was or he wasn't. Not about us just going to war against the cults, we're fighting these Jews who are waiting for a Messiah. It's really about telling everybody we run into that they need to consider the huge claims of Jesus. Because he deserves all peoples, all languages, all nations, he deserves their honor and their service. So let us be active about that this week.

I pray in Jesus name. Amen.