

THE BAPTIST HOUR

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THE ETERNAL CHRIST

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THE ETERNAL CHRIST

May I share with you one of the most astounding statements that I ever heard? A speaker recently said that during the last decade man has come into more knowledge than the sum-total of all the accumulated knowledge of history prior to that time!

This a staggering statement. But if it be true it poses for man his greatest problem and responsibility. What will we do with this knowledge? As of this moment it constitutes the greatest peril ever to hover over the human race.

Unless modern man finds a focal point about which to relate his enlarged and expanding sea of knowledge he may well sail away into oblivion. But if rightly related it can open to him vistas of beauty and glory which beckon him into the greatest era of the ages.

When Soviet Russia first sent a rocket beyond the moon Nikita Khrushchev is quoted as saying, "Our rocket has passed the moon. It is heading toward the sun, and we have not discovered God. We are turning out lights in heaven that no man will ever be able to turn on again. We are breaking the yoke of the Gospel, the opiate of the masses. Let us go forth, and Christ shall be relegated to mythology."

This is not the voice of the Number One Communist alone. It is the voice of a godless materialism which has led our age to the edge of the abyss. Someone has called physical science the modern Messiah. But like many false messiahs of history it leads its devotees to destruction. Properly understood and employed Science is not the Messiah. But for it to reach its divinely intended goal it and its devotees must be rightly related to the Messiah of God.

It is timely, therefore, that we should consider "The Eternal Christ." For He is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Until our age is confronted with the full stature and station of Christ it will continue to stumble along the

road which leads to despair, destruction, and death. Within this context, therefore, let us note, first, the Christ of eternity; second, the Christ of history; third, the Christ of the ages.

THE CHRIST OF ETERNITY

Catch the majestic sweep of the opening verse of John's Gospel. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" Literally rendered, "*In the beginning the Word always has been, and the Word always has been equal with God, and the Word always has been God Himself.*" Thus John declares in one brief sentence the eternity of Christ, the equality of Christ with God, and the unique deity of Christ as God Himself. He is co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal with God.

Thus when I confront you with Christ I am not speaking merely of a man in history, even the greatest man. I am talking about the eternal God Himself. When Jesus said to the Pharisees, "*Before Abraham was, I am.*" (John 8:58) He said literally, "*Before Abraham was born, I always Am.*" He is the eternal Presence.

"*He is before all things.*" (Col. 1:17) "Infinite ages before the morning stars sang together, he was the bright and morning Star. Ere the hills and mountains clapped their hands with glee, he was the Rock of Ages. When the earth was without form and void, he inhabited eternity. Ere the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep, he was the second Person of the Triune God.

"Eons before God said, 'Let there be light,' in eternity he was the Light thereof. Eternities before 'evening and morning were the first day,' he was the Ancient of Days . . .

"While the sun had not yet reigned over the day, he was the Sun of righteousness. Before the lover's moon bathed our first parents with its rays, he was My Beloved. When Eden's bowers were bare of blossoms, he was the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. Prior to the entrance of the first animal into the garden, he was the Lamb slain from before the foun-

dation of the world. Before man was formed from the dust of the ground, he was the Son of God, the Son of man.”*

Furthermore, John tells us that this eternal Christ is the Creator of the universe. John 1:3 reads literally, “Each several part of the universe came into being through him; and apart from him not even one thing came into being which came into being.”

Whence came the universe? Learned minds have advanced many theories as to its origin. Some say that matter is eternal, or that the universe is the result of chance. The world’s greatest scientists today admit to the fact of a divine creation. John says that it is the act of the eternal Christ who is God Himself.

And John is supported by the words of Paul. In Colossians 1:15-16, he says of Christ literally, “*Who is the image of the invisible God, Lord of all creation, because in the sphere of him the universe as a whole was created . . . the universe as a whole through him and unto him stands created.*”

This is a tremendous statement. Christ is the personal manifestation of the invisible God. He is the Lord of creation. Many modern men say that the universe was created out of nothing. Paul says that it was created “in the sphere of” Christ. He is its Source. The universe is an expression of His will and power.

Further Paul says that the entire universe was created “through him.” He is the immediate Agent in the creative act of God. And He is the Goal of creation. The universe finds its goal in Him.

Thus, John says that every part of the universe was created by Him. Paul says that He created it as a whole. He is its Lord. He rules it from atoms to solar systems.

But Paul adds a further word. “. . . *the entire universe holds together in him.*” (Col. 1-17) It was a great day when Galileo discovered that the uni-

*Hobbs, *Who Is This?*, Broadman, Nashville, 1952, pp. 21-22.

verse centered in the sun, not in the earth. But compared with present astronomical calculations this is a small thought indeed.

An astronomer recently announced that the universe contains twelve quadrillions of suns, each with its own solar system. And what is a quadrillion? In the United States and France it is the figure one followed by 15 ciphers; in England by 24 ciphers. Such a figure staggers the imagination!

It would be foolish, therefore, to say that the universe centers in the sun. There are numberless solar systems each of which centers in its sun. Now what does this mean? It means that science is finally discovering what the Bible has been saying for almost two thousand years. This universe with its twelve quadrillions of solar systems centers in Christ. "For the entire universe holds together in him." The more science learns about the universe, the more it magnifies Christ. How great, how glorious is this Christ of the eternities!

THE CHRIST OF HISTORY

What is the greatest thing that God in Christ has done? Create twelve quadrillions of solar systems? Hardly. The greatest act of God is not His creative but His redemptive act. This John expresses in John 1:14. Literally, "*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt for a little while among us . . . full of grace and truth.*"

Looking at his one solar system the psalmist cried, "*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visited him?*" (8:3-4) Modern man may say, "When I consider thy twelve quadrillions of solar systems, the work of thy fingers . . . what is man . . . that thou visitest him?"

Look at yourself. What are you worth? The materialist says only a few cents. The economist says only a few dollars. But God says that to Him you are worth more than twelve quadrillions of solar systems. Because for

you the eternal Christ stepped from eternity into time to redeem you.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.” This speaks of the virgin birth of Jesus. How else could the Son of God be born? It speaks of His sinless life. How else could Jesus be the Lamb without blemish and without spot? It speaks of His mighty miracles. For they were signs of His deity. It speaks of His vicarious death. For He who knew no sin died for you and me, sinners lost from God. It speaks of His resurrection. For by it He overcame death and Satan.

He was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1-4) It speaks of His ascension. For after He had dwelt among us for a little while He returned to the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting until His enemies become His footstool.

But the tragedy is, as John says literally, “*He came into his own things, and his own people received him not.*” His twelve quadrillions of solar systems bow before His will. But man refuses to receive Him. The water, wind, and waves, even germs and demons were subject to Him. Death fled before its conqueror. Man alone sets his will against this eternal Christ. But he does it to his own loss, both here and hereafter.

Beloved friend, you are the object of an eternal, divine love. Think of what Christ did to save you. Paul in Philippians 2 says that although He existed eternally as God He became a man, not a king but a slave. He died not in the dignity of the family circle ministered to by tender hands. He died the horrible, shameful death of the cross. He conquered the powers of sin and death—all for you. But if you receive Him not, all that He has done will avail nothing for you. It will become your condemnation.

“*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God . . .*” (John 1:12) The word “power” refers to the very being of God’s nature. If you receive Christ God imparts to you His very nature, so that you become a child of God. And

as Paul says (Rom. 8:17), “. . . if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ . . .”

Would you like to be a joint-heir to twelve quadrillions of solar systems? This is but the beginning. For greater than that you will receive eternal life. You will become a part of all that God will be doing in all eternity. Even the inspired Paul could not find words to express it. He could only say, “*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*” (I Cor. 2:9)

THE CHRIST OF THE AGES

John was a mystic. Only thus could he catch up in such fashion the mighty sweep of eternal truth. Back behind the barn of Bethlehem, through the gates of Eden, past the majestic opening stanza of Genesis, he sweeps us into the measureless council chambers of eternity, when he says, “*In the beginning was the Word . . .*” (1:1) And in words of awesome wonder he lifts us beyond time into eternity as he pens the words of the Ancient of Days. “*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*” (Rev. 22:13)

When you come face to face with Christ you are not confronted only with a man of history who wrought in time and then passed away, to become merely a memory or a page in the records of man. You are face to face with the eternal God. Before time was, by the word of His mouth He created twelve quadrillions of solar systems. At a given point in history He poured out His life unto death and conquered the regions of death and sin, to redeem a lost world back into the heart of God. Through the vast reaches of history beyond, He sits at the right hand of God ever living to hold intercession for you and me. (Heb. 7:25) By the power of His redemptive work He is redeeming even the universe unto Himself. (Rom. 8:21) The climax of history will see a redeemed and subdued universe, both natural and spiritual, forever in the center of God's will, where God will be all in all. (I Cor. 15:28) “*The*

kingdoms of this world [shall] become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 11:15)

Now it is this great, glorious, and wonderful Christ who would become your Saviour and Lord. He can become your Saviour through your faith in Him. He will be truly your Lord as you submit your life and all of its powers and possibilities to Him. In Him you can find the Anchor for life's storms.

The frail boat of the disciples was caught in the teeth of a gale on tempestuous Galilee. When the fury of the tempest was at its height, Jesus came walking on the waves. Seeing their fright He said, "*It is I; stop being afraid.*" (John 6:20, author's translation)

What a lesson for you and me! With the storm of our present world at its height, we are not alone. The eternal Christ is in the midst of the storm, keeping watch above His own. And across the towering waves of time He comes to us with the words, "*It is I; stop being afraid.*" And the waves respond as He says, "Peace, be still."

This sermon leaflet is free. However, if you wish to share in the cost of printing and distribution our address is: THE BAPTIST HOUR, P. O. Box 12157, Fort Worth 16, Texas.

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