



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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More On The Mark

David Clayton



UNDERLYING CHARACTERISTICS

The mark of the beast will be something implemented by the state, a requirement imposed on all people by the governing power. Therefore, it is evident that in this coming crisis, the principles of the state must clash with religious principle. On the part of the state, it will be a determination to impose the authority of the government, while on the part of those who refuse the mark it will be a determination to be true to their commitment to God. So from the government's side, the Mark of the Beast will be a political issue, while from the Christian's side, it will be a moral issue.

It has to be a crisis of such a nature, of such critical implications that it justifies, in our "free" world, the death penalty for failure to comply with the state. This kind of treatment is normally only reserved for those who are guilty of treason. This suggests the development of a global system of government, so tyrannical, so totalitarian that it will kill those who resist it, even for relatively minor issues.

This is an amazing scenario! What could

cause the governments of the world to come to such a place? The issue which causes rage and the death sentence is not the magnitude of the crime, but the unyielding nature of the resistance. It is not the crime which is the issue, but the fact that people dare to resist the dictates of the government. This is how it has been in communist countries where any resistance is viewed as dangerous, and something to be crushed.

There will be a way to paint the resistance as treason, as "hate crimes." In some way those who resist will come to be regarded as enemies of the state. Such a crisis will come because the world reaches a place where the state is supreme. It not only wields supreme power, but comes to be regarded as being legitimately entitled to supreme worship and allegiance.

LEARN FROM HISTORY

The record of the past reveals the way the future conflict will develop. The Caesars of Rome saw Christianity as a threat because it threatened the stability of the empire. Not that the Christians were destructive or anti-social criminals, but that they disturbed the established lifestyle, creating as it were, a state within a state. They were killed because they destroyed the concept that the state was the authority to be given supreme allegiance.

This has been the issue in every single persecution of God's people in the past. This will be the pattern in the Mark of the Beast crisis.

DEVELOPING CONFLICT

Already we can see clear areas of conflict. There are aspects of people's lives into which the government has intruded and assumed control where it has no right to venture. These issues are time bombs waiting to explode because they create areas where the conscience of an individual may come in conflict with the state. Some of these issues are:

- 1. The State claims the exclusive right to educate children.
- 2. The state claims the exclusive right to determine what may acceptably be taught to children (subjects such as evolution and homosexuality are routinely taught in schools regardless of whether or not parents approve.
- 3. The state claims the right to dictate whether or not children should be punished.
- 4. The state claims the right to determine what is morally acceptable.
- 5. The state claims the rights to your body (the right of vaccination, the right to impose medical treatment etc.)
- 6. The state claims the right to determine who you meet with in your own home.

TIGHTER MEASURES

Over the last thirty years or so, the gov-

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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NO STABILIZING FACTOR

The world has passed through many stages, many crises during its past 6000 year history. However, one thing has always been a factor in every single age of this planet's existence and it has been the fact that men always acknowledged the presence and the authority of a higher power called "God." Even though man's understanding of God was often badly distorted, the acknowledgement that there was a supreme being, restrained the hands of rulers, to some extent. Even if the ruler himself cared nothing for God, the fact that his subjects feared some divine being and regarded His authority as being greater than even that of the king, made rulers cautious about going too far.

Today, however, we have finally come to the place where the knowledge of God has been all but erased from the upcoming generation of humans. Satan has achieved his master plan by establishing the teaching of evolution in schools. The young people of today have a much greater disrespect and contempt for religion and God, than any previous generation ever had. We are about to see for the first time what it is like to live in a world where men do not believe in God. With God out of the picture, all we are left with to govern us is human wisdom. This is a frightening prospect. Mankind is groping in the dark, meddling with things which he knows nothing about, conducting genetic experiments, messing with the environment, redefining morality. When these experiments begin to bear fruit as they are already doing, the only cure for this world will be to utterly destroy it and start over again.

THE MICROCHIP

One of the factors which has always made the Mark of the Beast crisis seem like an unlikely fantasy, is the fact that there has never been a system of state control which could implement the kind of total control which the Bible de-

scribes. We are told that every person on the earth, "rich and poor, free and bond, small and great," will be compelled to receive this mark of the beast and that nobody will be able to buy or sell unless he has the mark. How will the beast-government enforce such a law? How will the state be able to control trading, and monitor all forms of it so closely that certain individuals will be completely excluded?

Up until a few years ago, these were the kinds of questions which made the mark of the beast crisis seem like an impossibility, but not anymore. Today, technology has exploded beyond man's wildest dreams. It is now possible for governments to monitor the activities of citizens almost every second of every day. With the advent of the internet, cell phone technology, microwave and satellite communications, it is very difficult for any human being to hide these days if the powers that be wish to keep tabs on him. Most countries already require each citizen to be identified by a number, whether it is called a "Social Security Number," or an "Identification Number," or a "Tax Registration Number." In order to obtain a passport or a driver's license, each citizen must be registered in a database which contains critical information about his identity and location among other things.

Now with the advent of the microchip, finally, the technology has been perfected whereby every person can be constantly monitored night and day. Most of us are aware that the microchip is a tiny computerized chip, encased in unbreakable glass about the size of a grain of rice. There is growing demand for citizens to have this chip implanted inside their bodies, possibly somewhere in the hand or arm.

The microchip is a wonderful invention which has great possibilities. On the surface, it appears to be a good idea to have this chip implanted in every person. The microchip could contain all the information necessary to identify a person and to allow him to carry out any transaction. Think about it, there would no longer be any need for a per-

ernments of the world have been assuming tighter and tighter control over their citizens. Governments claim that these measures are necessary and that they are for the good of the citizens and particularly for the good of the state. What is happening is that individuals are becoming less and less important while the state becomes the god whom everyone must bow to and worship. These are the conditions which will prevail when the mark of the beast is enforced. The following issues are being used as excuses for the ever-increasing control which the state exercises over the people.

- Immigration control
- Drugs control
- Health safety
- Human rights
- Civil rights
- Gun and crime control
- Genocide intervention.

son to carry a wallet, credit card, driver's license, passport, or any form of identification. All this information would be contained in a single tiny chip embedded beneath the skin in a convenient place available to be scanned any time there was the need to identify a person or to do business with him. In addition to this, it would be a simple matter to find a person who was lost if such a person had the chip implanted in his body.

For governments it would be a dream come true. It would make cash unnecessary. People doing business would simply need to transfer credit from chip to chip. Money laundering, drug transactions and tax evasion would be very difficult. It is easy to see why governments would like to have the chip implanted in all citizens. The challenge is that many people are strongly opposed to the idea of any system which would allow the government to have such intimate knowledge of their affairs. However, the growing cry for greater security, the rise of crime and terrorism has gradually made people more willing to give up their freedoms in the name of safety. More and more people are willing to believe that greater control by the government is a good thing since they believe it is the only way to control crime and terrorism.

This is what may open the door to the introduction of the microchip as compulsory for every person on earth. If not the microchip, then some technology very similar. The point is, for the Mark of the Beast to become a reality there has to be a system in place which enables the governments of the world to have absolute control over the finances, the buying and selling, the trading of its citizens, some way to closely monitor their every activity. The microchip technology provides such a system. Finally, the world is ready technologically, for the Mark to be instituted.

We should note that there is nothing morally wrong with the microchip itself. In and of itself the microchip is a great idea and a great invention. It is the potential which exists for it to be used to

totally control the lives of people which is the problem. In other words, having a microchip implanted in one's body would not in and of itself be a sin. The microchip is NOT the mark of the beast. However, it provides the technology necessary to implement and enforce the mark. It is not the microchip which is the problem, but the use which may be made of it.

AN IMAGE TO THE BEAST

What is the "image of the beast?" Revelation 13:13-15 tells us that the two-horned beast which came up out of the earth commanded those who dwell on the earth to make an image of the beast and that he had power to give life to this image of the beast.

This indicates that in the New World chiefly represented by the United States, a system of government will be set up which resembles and functions after the same pattern as the system of government which exists in the first beast (Europe). This does not mean that a system of government is to be established which has seven heads and ten horns, but rather, it suggests that a system is to be set up in the Americas which will have the following characteristics:

- A secularized, godless government.
- A state in which morality has been expelled.

These are the characteristics of the first beast a system of government which has been prominent in Europe for some time. A secular, atheistic, totalitarian type of government. According to the prophecy, America will make an image of this system. We can expect to see the same kind of government develop there as exists in Europe.

WORSHIP IS THE ISSUE

The book of Revelation tells us that everybody must worship the image or be killed: It is interesting that the word "worship" is used. Worship is a unique experience, it suggests supreme allegiance of body, soul and spirit. It suggests unconditional submission. This is what all are required to give to this

image of the beast. It is a condition where the state takes the place of God (as in communism).

Everybody who lives in the new world must submit to the system of government, on pain of death, must accept its philosophy regardless of conscience. This, effectively, is worship.

MARK, NAME OR NUMBER

Revelation 13:17 says,

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Rev 13:17)

It seems that not everybody will necessarily receive the Mark. Each person receives either the Mark, OR the name, OR the number of the beast. All will not necessarily receive the mark, but must have some other characteristic which shows loyalty to the beast, either the number or the name. What is the difference between these three things, the mark, the number and the name?

THE MARK

A mark in this context is a means of identification (Ezek. 9:4-6), it is a means of distinguishing one set of persons from another. When we read the book of Revelation we should be aware that it is primarily a book of symbols. The pictures and images which we see there are not intended to be taken literally (for the most part), but should be interpreted by applying a meaning to the symbol. The mark then does not necessarily signify a literal mark, some outward symbol, tattoo or stamp, as many people believe. What it signifies is some means by which one set of people can be differentiated from the others.

God condemns the receiving of the Mark of the Beast. In Revelation 14:9-12 He states that His wrath will be poured out without mixture upon those who receive this mark. This shows that those who receive this Mark of the Beast will be in a condition which is highly offensive to God. In addition it suggests that those who receive it have set themselves to deliberately defy Him, which is the reason why the punishment is so

harsh. So we can be sure that this mark is not simply something as superficial as the placing of a tattoo or a stamp somewhere upon a person's body. It must involve the conscience and the heart. It must involve some behavior, some commitment to something which is clearly a blatant sin, something which is obviously wrong, but which has been embraced by those who receive this mark.

This mark is received either in the forehead or the right hand. What does this mean? It suggests that this distinguishing characteristic may be seen either in how a person thinks (forehead), or in the things which he does (right hand). So there must be some system established which will make it demonstrable what everyone is either thinking or doing.

THE MARK IN ROMANS

When we compare Romans chapter 1 with the Mark of the Beast crisis as described in Revelation 13 and 14, we see something very interesting. Romans chapter 1 seems to be an explanation of what the Mark of the Beast is about. The following chart will demonstrate the startling similarity. In Romans chapter 1, the apostle Paul is speaking of what happens when people deliberately reject God. The first result, according to Paul, is that such people turn to Sodomite behavior. Read the chapter carefully and this becomes very clear. It is a very striking commentary on what is happening in the world today.

As we pointed out in the last edition of the newsletter, the third angel's message of Revelation 13, also points to the destruction of Sodom in a very striking and unmistakable way. God is saying something to us if we will listen. It seems clear that the Mark of the Beast crisis will be centered around the issue of sodomy. As we see the unnatural and zealous promotion of this perversion in the world today and the widespread acceptance of it by the most powerful nations, it becomes clear that we are at the very end of time and the last crisis is about to break out upon the world!

THE NAME

For a long time I had no clue as to what the name of the Beast was. I read various theories, but recently I was studying again and the answer which came to me was so simple that it was almost ludicrous. It seems amazing that I can't recall ever hearing this answer before.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. (Rev 13:1)

There it tells you; upon the heads of the beast is the name of "blasphemy." It says the same thing in Revelation 17:3. There, in plain sight is the name of the beast. His name is "blasphemy."

A name in the Bible often was used to express the character of the individual so named. Several times in the Bible a person received a new name when his

character changed or as a result of some unusual experience which he had. Two examples of this are Abram whose name was changed to Abraham, and Jacob whose name was changed to Israel.

So when the Bible speaks of the name of the beast, it is referring to the character, the nature of the beast. The nature of this beast is that it is a godless power which has as its chief identifying characteristic, the attitude of blasphemy. Not all receive the Mark of the Beast; some will receive his name or his number. This suggests that there are those who will have the same nature and character as the beast power, that is, they will manifest the same disregard for God, as the beast and so, will have his name. Those who possess this characteristic will of course, also avoid persecution by the beast.

In passing, let us note that the name of blasphemy belongs to the beast, it is found on the head of the beast in both Revelation 13 and 17. It is not the name of the woman who rides the beast, her name is "Babylon." The name of blasphemy belongs to the beast and is not associated with a religious power, but a secular power.

THE NUMBER

What do numbers signify in the Bible? Two numbers which come to mind are the numbers seven and twelve. These numbers come up very often in connection with God's operations. The seventh day, the seventh month the seventh year, the seven plagues, the seven trumpets, the seven seals the seven churches etc. We also see the twelve tribes, the twelve apostles and multiples of this number such as the 24 elders (12x2) and the 144,000 (12x12). What we can see is that the numbers seven and twelve represent God's pattern of operation. It represents the principle on which God carries out His activities in the earth and among His people. It seems evident that numbers are used in a symbolic way to signify a **pattern of operation** or the **underlying principle** behind how God or someone else operates. We don't look at the literal meaning of the number, but rather we look for a character-

	The Third Angels' Message	Romans Chapter 1
1	The everlasting gospel	Not ashamed of the gospel (15,16)
2	Give glory to him	Glorified him not as God (21)
3	The hour of his judgment is come	Knowing the Judgment of God
4	Worship him that made	Did not worship the Creator (25)
5	Heaven, earth the sea	Created things show his power (20)
6	Worshipped the beast	Worshipped and served the creature (25)
7	Made an image of the beast	Made an image of created things (23)
8	The mark in the forehead	Take pleasure in those who do them (32)
9	The mark in the hand	They do those things (32)
10	God's wrath poured out	God's wrath revealed (18)
11	The close of probation	God gave them up (26,28)
12	The faith of Jesus	The just live by faith (17)

istic which is suggested by the number. For example, the number seven signifies completeness or perfection, while the number 12 points to God's kingdom.

When we apply this idea to the number of the beast we see that the number of the beast, 666, represents the pattern of operation of the beast. It describes the principle behind how the beast operates in the earth

As we mentioned before, when studying the book of Revelation we find many clues to interpreting it by looking at the Old Testament passages which use the same language and speak of the same things. The book of Revelation is written in the language and symbolism of the Old Testament. When we apply this rule to the number of the beast we find something interesting. According to Revelation 13:18, the number of the beast is the number of a man and "his number is Six hundred threescore and six." When we search through the Bible to find that same phrase, we find it in 1 Kings 10:14, where it says:

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, (1 Ki 10:14)

This is very interesting. In the days of Solomon, Israel attained to the pinnacle of its glory. It was the highest point to which man could attain in terms of worldly glory, and the Bible measured it in terms of gold, or finances. The mark of the Beast issue will be enforced by controlling the finances of the entire planet. People who are out of harmony with the system will not be allowed to buy or sell.

The financial system then represents "man's number," or the principle underlying how men operate. It signifies the highest point to which humanity can attain, apart from God. Take God out of the picture and what is it that drives and motivates humanity? It is always the desire for wealth, glory, and power. This is the ultimate as far as the goals of humanity are concerned; it can rise no higher without God.

Today, evolutionary atheism has all but

driven the knowledge of God out of modern society. Evolution is taught in schools as fact, while it is forbidden to pray or to mention the name of God. Along with this change there has come a different value system than existed one hundred years ago. Today, money is everything. Anything is justified in the name of financial gain.



So those who receive the number of the beast are those who are wrapped up in the financial system of the beast-controlled planet, those who are driven by the same motivation of worldly gain. For this reason they embrace the philosophies and ideals of the beast and in this way, they are said to have received the number of the beast.

FROM PERSECUTION TO EXECUTION

When the mark of the beast is first implemented, it will be a peaceful procedure. Like the passing of all laws it will go through the process of discussion, assessment and finally implementation. This is when the trouble will start. Why will it escalate to the place where there is persecution, where there are arrests and ultimately, a death decree?

It has to be that there is resistance of such a nature that it threatens to undermine the state. Governments will not normally persecute people unless they feel threatened. Usually, governments feel threatened when there is danger of rebellion and insurrection.

This resistance of Christians comes from the fact that they stand for some Christian principle which is diametrically opposed to the government's policy, thus drawing the wrath of the

government. So the government must very forcefully promote and establish some practice which will be accepted by all its citizens, but which will be adamantly rejected by Christians.

Furthermore, it must be a practice which is of such a nature that many professing Christians (those who do not truly know Christ), will feel at liberty to cooperate with the government and reject God's counsel on this matter. It has to be an issue which, though glaringly black and white, is of such a nature that black is presented as white and white is presented as black and is wholeheartedly accepted by the vast majority of the world. It may also be a matter of such a nature that it produces an attack on the Bible and may even lead to the Bible being outlawed as "hate literature."

AUTHORITY IS THE ISSUE

Obviously the state will push it aggressively. The Christian community will push back. The consequence is that the irresistible force meets the immovable object. Something has to give. The nature of the state is to ensure that its authority is not resisted and this characteristic is even more marked when the principles of atheism and communism have infected the nations. Communism has already murdered tens of millions for no crime other than the crime of resisting the state. This is the spirit which governs atheistic communism.

What kind of government system are we looking at in the image of the beast? This is the real issue. When the system becomes atheistic and communistic, then opposition of the state will not be tolerated. Disagreement with the state will be treated as rebellion against the state, as "war against the beast," and this will be treated as treason, punishable by death.

As we look at what is happening in the world today, it is clear that the time is at hand.



Thrice Begotten



IS JESUS THE SON OF GOD?

The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. There are many theories as to what this means and this topic has caused a great deal of disagreement among Christians. Jesus is referred to as God's "only begotten Son," God's "firstborn Son," God's "first begotten," and of course, simply as "the Son of God."

Most Christians have interpreted these statements to mean that Jesus was simply designated as the son of God or labeled as the Son of God, because he had a special kind of relationship with God. Very few Christians have accepted that he was really the Son of God in any literal way. Most believe that God is a Trinity, and in the Trinitarian doctrine, Jesus is absolutely equal to God the Father in every way. They are the same age, equal in authority and absolutely equal in all their abilities and attributes.

Normally, we understand that a son is one who proceeds from the life of a parent. The parent's life is passed on to the son thus making him another person. This is the key element which makes one person the son of another. It is the transfer of life where the son comes into existence by receiving the life of the parent. The son is always equal to the parent in nature, and often in abilities and attributes. No true son can ever be equal to his father in age, this is why Trinitarians cannot believe

that Jesus is literally the Son of God, because they insist that they are both the same age, with Jesus never having received life from God the Father.

THE TRINITARIAN "SON"

Trinitarians have interpreted Jesus' sonship in several different ways.

- 1. Some have said that he only became God's son when he was conceived of the holy spirit in Mary's womb.
- 2. Some have said that he became God's son when he was resurrected from the dead.
- 3. Others have claimed that the title, "son of God," was only a general term used to refer to prophets and other men specially chosen by God.
- 4. In the classical understanding of the Trinity, as taught by the Catholic Church and many protestant churches, Jesus is God's son in a very mysterious way. He is God's son by a process of eternal begetting. This means that he is continually being begotten by the Father. This is not something which God did and which resulted in a son being begotten, it is a process which never ends and which will continue as long as God exists. It has always been this way and it will always be this way. This strange, unexplainable belief has been labeled a "mystery," just like all the other illogical ideas associated with the Trinity.

TRUTH AND ERROR

As is the case with most subjects, when there are two different opinions, there is usually some truth and some error involved. When we examine the Bible carefully we find that there is some element of truth in the Trinitarian ideas about Jesus' sonship, but there is also much error.

The Bible teaches that Jesus actually became the son of God in a very real way, on three different occasions. What is more, as we understand the nature

of each occasion on which he was begotten, we see that each time he became the son of God it was critical for the salvation of humanity.

BEGOTTEN FROM THE DEAD

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? (Heb 1:5)

I used to read this verse and think that it referred to the time when Jesus was begotten by God, way back in the days of eternity, but a more careful examination of the Scriptures made me revise my opinion. In this verse, Paul is quoting from Psalm 2:7

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Ps 2:7)

The apostle Paul states clearly that this verse in the Psalms is referring to the resurrection of Christ from the grave. In Acts 13:32-33 he says,

And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Acts 13:32-33)

He teaches the same truth in Rom 1:4 where he says of Jesus,

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

So it is very clear that Jesus became the son of God when he was resurrected from the dead. It was at that time that God said, "thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." But the question is, in what way did he become the son of God at the resurrection if he were already

the son of God before that time? We will look more closely at this question in a little while. But let us note that in the resurrection from the dead, this was the **third** time that Jesus became the Son of God. He became the Son of God because God gave him life when he took him from the grave. The origin of his resurrected life was God.

BORN INTO HUMANITY

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

There is not much room for controversy concerning this event. The angel says very clearly that the “holy thing,” which was to be born of her was to be called the son of God, why? Because he was conceived by the power of the holy spirit, he received life directly from God. All humans are born with a father and a mother, but Jesus had no human father and by the laws of biology he had no right to exist. However, God gave him life by directly bestowing life on him, contrary to the laws of nature and so, in this way God was his Father. His life, as a man, originated in God. So he became the son of God at His conception in Mary’s womb. This was the **second** time that Jesus was begotten of God.



BORN INTO THE UNIVERSE

The first time that Jesus became the Son of God was when he was born into the universe. This is the begetting that Trinitarians will not accept, but let us examine the biblical evidence. We start with Paul’s statement in Col. 1:15-17:

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (Col 1:15-17)

The passage says that he is the firstborn of every creature, then it goes on to prove that statement. How does Paul prove it? He says, “for by him were all things created.” In other words, the proof that Jesus was firstborn in all the universe, is the fact that he created **all things!** He could not have created all things unless he existed before all things. How did he come to be before all things? He was before all things because he was firstborn of all that exists in all creation.

The meaning of the passage is very evident because at the end, Paul repeats the point he is making: “*and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*”

Now those who deny that Jesus obtained life by being born from God will go to the verse which follows. It says,

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (Col 1:18)

In this verse we see clearly that Paul is speaking of Jesus being the head of the church and he declares that he, Christ, is the beginning of the Church, the head of the body by being firstborn from the dead. There is no question that he is speaking of Christ being begotten in the resurrection, but is this what he is speaking about in the two previous verses? Absolutely not and an honest reader will see the difference easily.

In the first two verses, the focus is on Jesus existing before all created things, because he created all things.

In the third verse the focus changes and in fact, Paul begins the third verse (verse 18) with the word “and.” This shows that he is saying something else in addition to what he already said. In addition to Jesus being firstborn in the universe, he is also firstborn in the church, so he is doubly qualified to be Lord of all. This is the point.

This is not the only place where we find Paul making reference in the same passage, to two different times when Christ was begotten. He does it again in Hebrews chapter 1.

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. (Heb 1:5-6)

Can we see the two begettings? First he quotes from Psalm 2:7, which as we have seen, is speaking of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. At that time God said, “*thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.*” But then he goes on to speak of Jesus’ original begetting because he says, “*when he bringeth the firstbegotten into the world.*” There he is speaking of a time long before Jesus died, he is speaking of when he was born in Bethlehem and he refers to Jesus at that time as “the firstbegotten.” This description as “firstbegotten” clearly refers to the original birth of Jesus back in eternity, not to when he became a man, because, as a man, he was not firstbegotten. Born as a man, he was the second Adam, and in this identity, Adam was the son of God before Jesus was.

In addition, the Bible tells us in several places (notably John 3:16) that God sent his only begotten Son into the world. Simple reasoning tells us that if God sent his son into the world, he must have had a Son to send. He did not send Jesus and then after he was sent he became the Son of God. No, at the time when he was

sent he was already the Son of God. This is how we can measure God's love, as we see the value of the gift which he gave.

A UNIQUE SON ONLY ONCE

Let us note that when he was born from the dead, Jesus became God's son by receiving life from God, but in this sense, he is not the only son of God. He is the firstborn of many brethren. There will be other sons of God who are born by the same experience of obtaining life from the dead.

Again, when he was born into humanity, Jesus was not the only son of God. He was the last Adam, a human who received life directly from God and not from another human. But in this sense, there are two sons of God and Jesus was not the first, he was the second.

However, in his original birth when Jesus came into the universe He was born from the very being of God. In this birth, Jesus is the only begotten son of God. There is nobody, and there never was any, and there never will be any like him in this respect.

IMPLICATIONS OF EACH BEGETTING

As I said earlier, each time that Jesus became the son of God it was an event vital to our salvation. If he had not become God's true son on each occasion, salvation would not have been possible for the human race. It is not possible for us to explore this fact in depth in such a short article, but I will briefly mention why each begetting was so important.

His first begetting - only begotten:

This begetting of Jesus, directly from God's own life and substance is the guarantee that Jesus was exactly like God, one who possessed the same nature and character as the Father. This was critical to the future mission of Jesus to save humanity, because in order to carry out that task he had to be:

- One who could perfectly represent God
- One who was good in himself, so that when he took man's place on

the cross and was separated from God, he could still choose God's way.

His second begetting - as the last Adam:

He was God's son, but not the only begotten in this sense. He was humanity created a second time, to get a second chance. It is because he, as a human being, defeated sin and the devil why we are able as humans, to obtain salvation in him. If he did not become the human son of God, the last Adam, he could not have fought the battle on our behalf.

His third begetting - as the new creation:

He was humanity coming back from the dead into a new existence, reborn by the power of God as a brand new race with a different destiny. In this identity he is not unique, there will be others like him. When he became the son of God in the resurrection and was glorified and exalted to the pinnacle of glory, he opened the door for all who believe in him to experience the same privilege, but it is only possible because he first experienced it.



AN ETERNAL GIFT

There is a question which bothered my mind for many years. I heard many answers to this question, but none of them ever really satisfied me. The question was, "what was the sacrifice which God made when he gave his only begotten Son?" The answers were as follows:

- He suffered and died on the cross and God suffered terribly when he saw his suffering. But it lasted for a few hours and then it was over.
- He lost his intimate fellowship with his son for 33 years when Jesus became a man and was limited as a man, but of course he obtained him back again when Jesus was glorified in the resurrection.
- The sacrifice was that Jesus became a member of the human race and will remain a part of this inferior race for all eternity.

It was while I was studying this subject and reading the passages relating to the sonship of Jesus that a thought was suggested to my mind. At first I did not want to accept it, because it seemed too outrageous to consider, something that would have been too much of a sacrifice even for God. But the more I thought about it and looked at the Bible, the more feasible it became.

The first thing I noticed was that each time Jesus became the Son of God, it was as a new identity. The first time it was in his origins, when he first came into existence. His identity was then, the only begotten son of God. The second time it was as a man, a member of the fallen race. His identity was then, the son of Mary, the second Adam. The third time was as the first of the new creation, the victorious, redeemed humanity, elevated to the pinnacle of glory and power by God.

When Jesus became a man, what happened to his original identity as the begotten Son of God? Here is what Paul says in Philippians chapter 2:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,

and given him a name which is above every name: (Phil 2:5-9)

Jesus, the son of God, being in the form of God, became a man. He did not pretend to be a man, he did not simply assume a *disguise*, He *became* a man. This was his new identity, it was who he was. Yes, he was a man with a divine character, he was a good man, but he was still, fully a man, just as limited as all men are. When he became a man he left his old identity behind forever, it was not a loan, it was not a temporary change, God gave his son and he gave him forever, but there is more to it than that.

When Jesus became a man, it is clear that he came into this new identity as all men do. He was first a fetus in Mary's womb, then he was born as a little child and grew up as all little children grow up. It is obvious that as a baby, he had no awareness of who he was, but as he grew older, he increased in wisdom and knowledge and somehow, he began to realize that he was a special person with a special mission. Eventually he came to realize that he was the pre-incarnate son of God. But the question is, how did he come to know this? Did he at some point regain his omniscience? Did he suddenly recall all that had transpired before he became a man? Was he suddenly restored to his former identity?

The Bible makes it clear that Jesus knew who he was *by faith*. It was not something he remembered, nor was he restored to that former state. He came to an awareness of who he was because it was gradually revealed to him during his life. Maybe it was through dreams and visions, it probably was partly due to his study of the word of God, but he came to this realization by faith, it was not by a restoration to his former self. This is why Satan tried to shake his confidence in who he was in the wilderness temptation. If he knew inherently who he was, Satan's temptations would have been meaningless, but they were powerful, because he knew only by faith, and faith can be shaken.

REINCARNATION

I now realize that when Jesus became a man, the experience can best be likened to the concept of reincarnation. Reincarnation is a false doctrine taught by many eastern religions, yet, I believe it has a basis in truth. According to the doctrine, a person is born again into a different life, with a different identity with no awareness or recollection of the former life. The spirit in the person is the same spirit, but without any knowledge of that former life. As I said, this is a false doctrine, but I believe it is true in one instance. It happened only one time in the history of the universe.

I believe this is what happened to Jesus when God gave him to us, he gave up his identity forever and became a man. He gave up his awareness of his former life, he gave up his memories, the ages of association he had had with God, he gave it all up forever, in order to save the human race! He did become a man, it was not pretense, nor a temporary transition! The only thing which he took with him when he became a man was his spirit of infinite purity. This spirit dwelt in a human body, but without its memories, powers, awareness etc. In effect, Jesus was a human being with a divine character. It was in this new identity that he began to build a new relationship with God the Father. The old one was gone forever.

So effectively, God did lose his son, *forever*. If we want to understand what this really meant, just think of your wife or husband or your son, losing memory *forever*. He or she may begin to rebuild a different life with you, but the former memories are something which you alone will share. Effectively, you are starting all over again with a stranger. That person can only hear you speak of the past, but will never know it. This, I believe, is what happened when Christ chose to save us. In effect, he gave his life away *forever*, and started again as a human being. This is the pain and the loss that it cost God and His son to save us!

Could even God make such a sacrifice? And what of his Son, could he have

agreed to such a thing? Yes, he would know that he would be born again, that he would develop another relationship with the Father just as close as before. He would be aware that he would still exist in a sense, but to lose the past forever, is inconceivable.

What a love! It is beyond comprehension that even God would consent to such a sacrifice, but when I understand this, then I can begin to see the incredible love of God in giving his son. Finally, for me, it makes sense.

Amazingly, Jesus had to die again as a man, and in a sense, this too was an eternal death - not in reality, but in a sense, because he again faced the same crisis on the cross when he thought that he would be dead forever. In effect, he made again the same sacrifice which he had made when he became a man. But this time, he was resurrected in the same identity, only, now he was given life again, as we will be given life, and was elevated to the pinnacle of power and glory and made Lord of the universe. But notice, it was not as the only begotten son of God that Jesus was made Lord of the universe. As the only begotten son of God, Lordship of the universe had been his by right, but he gave this up when he became a man and he gave it up forever. Now, it is as a victorious man, one who has defended the name of God, who has defeated the enemies of God, that he is exalted to the place where he is Ruler of the universe. At his name, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is once again the Lord of all creation, but notice it is in a new identity and on a different basis.



The Best Medicine

Lenworth Frankson



A wise king once said: “*there is a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance*” Throughout the bible we find verses that encourage laughter, joy and happiness. In the book of Proverbs we read, “*A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken*” and “*A merry heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones*”. I believe that man was created with the ability to smile and laugh when experiencing feelings of joy and happiness. Certainly, this is not the only ways to express pleasant feelings. The important question we need to look at as we explore laughter is this: Are there other psychological and physical benefits or blessings in laughter and why does laughing until you hurt, feel so good?

Psychologists believe that good laughter involves far more than just simple amusement. One reason is because it’s inherently physical. There are many reasons why we laugh. People sometimes giggle because they are feeling uncomfortable or it could be that they are feeling awkward and embarrassed and just want to cover their embarrassment. As weird as it might sound a person might laugh due to anxiety, confusion, discomfort or even stress in social situations. It is a known fact that laughing does help us get in a better mood. Laughing about a stressful or difficult situation not only can help you

cope better, but can help us connect with others.

One research found that we’re thirty times more likely to laugh when we’re with other people than when we’re alone and people who laugh a lot may just have a strong connection to the person or persons around them.

Laughing can trigger short-term as well as long-term positive effects in our bodies. Here are a few reasons why a good laugh is good for you.

- Stimulates your organs by forcing you to inhale more oxygen than when you’re just breathing, which automatically works your lungs and heart muscles.
- Increases your endorphins, the “feel good” brain chemicals that flood your whole body with a feeling of lightness.
- Promotes reduction to our anxiety level and helps us relax.
- Laughter boosts your immune system. Negative conversations open the door for free radicals to damage our body’s cells. When we laugh, chemicals are released that help combat stress and disease.
- Laughter relieves physical tension and stress, leaving muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after.
- Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving resistance to disease.
- Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.
- One study found that laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day can burn about 40 calories, which could be enough to lose three or four pounds over the course of a year.

- A study in Norway found that people with a strong sense of humor outlived those who don’t have a strong sense of humor.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF LAUGHTER

Research shows that we are more likely to laugh in a social setting than when we are by ourselves. The most obvious reason for laughing is not necessarily because we think something is funny but rather to trigger positive feelings in other people.

One study concluded that: “The primary function of laughter may not be self-expression. Instead, the purpose of a laugh could be to trigger positive feelings in other people. When you laugh, the people around you might start laughing in response. Soon, the whole group is cheerful and relaxed. Laughter can ease tension and foster a sense of group unity”

Laughter is usually socially motivated. Sometimes we might not find something particularly funny, but listening to other peoples’ laughter might cause us to laugh due to the weird and funny sounds they make when they laugh. To some extent we could say that laughing is a social emotion and we use it to make and maintain social bonds. An interesting thing about people and laughter is that what we find amusing, which makes us laugh is often something universally funny. Further, laughter is a very recognizable sound. When someone who speaks a completely different language finds something amusing and laughs, we know what it means.

LAUGHING HELPS LEARNING

There are some psychologists who believe that laughter helps to facilitate our capacity to learn new things. This idea is especially seen in children and that’s why laughter is such an important part of their play. They believe that laughter actually helps children learn

new skills as they engage in playful activities. More importantly, laughter helps ensure they are in an emotionally healthy and safe environment.

Researchers conducted an experiment on babies, some only 18 months old, to determine whether laughter would help focus attention, motivate, perceive, memorize and learn. The conclusion showed that the babies who laughed learned to target actions better. The researchers believed that the reason for this is due to the release of a brain chemical called dopamine.

Many scientist now believe that dopamine causes us to feel good or gives what they call “a natural high” which is definitely better than a chemical high.

Dopamine is a chemical that helps control our brain’s reward and pleasure centers. It is responsible for sending messages between the brain and different nerve cells of the body. Some call it the motivation molecule that gives you a little thrill when you accomplish something. Others believe that it encourages laughter too. In addition, scientists now believe that we can increase our dopamine by choosing healthy foods such as almonds, avocados, eggs, watermelon and yogurt. Healthy spices such as turmeric are also among the list. Dopamine can also help us to relax by opening our minds to see the humor in things.

LAUGHTER AS MEDICINE

A new study at Loma Linda University tried to find out if humor could deliver more than just comic relief. The study looked at 20 healthy older adults in their sixties and seventies, measuring their stress levels and short-term memory. One group was asked to sit silently, not talking, reading, or using their cell-phones, while the other group watched funny videos. After 20 minutes, the participants gave saliva samples and took a short memory test. While both groups performed better after the break than before, the “humor group” performed significantly better when it came to memory recall. Participants who viewed the funny videos had much

higher improvement in recall abilities, 43.6 percent, compared with 20.3 percent in the non-humor group. Moreover, the humor group showed considerably lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, after watching the videos. The non-humor group’s stress levels decreased just slightly. Other studies have also shown the wide-ranging health benefits of laughter. A Vanderbilt University study estimated that just 10-15 minutes of laughter a day can burn up to 40 calories. Meanwhile, a University of Maryland study found that a sense of humor could protect against heart disease.

LEARN TO LAUGH

It is believed that a good sense of humor can be developed. Here are a few simple exercises that might be helpful:

- Don’t take everything serious all the time, especially yourself. Learn to laugh at yourself, it may help in handling stressful situations.
- Never make others part of your laughter therapy. Discerning what’s appropriately funny should never include making someone else feel bad.
- Smiling is the beginning of laughter. Like laughter, it’s contagious. When you look at someone or see something even mildly pleasing, practice smiling.
- Count your blessings. Literally make a list. The simple act of considering the blessings in your life will distance you from negative thoughts that are a barrier to humor and laughter.
- When you hear laughter, move toward it. People are very happy to share something funny because it gives them an opportunity to laugh again and feel the humor in it. When individuals hear laughter, they tend to seek it out.
- Spend time with fun, playful people: These are people who laugh easily, both at themselves and at life’s absurdities and who routinely find humor in everyday events. Their playful point of view and laughter are contagious.
- Bring humor into conversations. Ask people questions like: What’s the

funniest thing that happened to you today, this week or in your life?

One of the long-term benefits you get from laughter also includes pain relief, simply because pain thresholds rise when endorphin levels increase. Robin Dunbar, a professor of at Oxford University says that:

“Laughter is definitely some of the best medicine for pain. It seems that endorphins tune up the immune system; so triggering their release through laughter helps you recover from disease and allows the body to resist infection... the more you engage in social events that involve laughter, you’ll be better able to bear chronic pain. No doubt the pharmaceutical companies won’t like it, but laughter would save on hospital bills.”

Here is a thought to consider. Infants begin smiling during the first weeks of life and laugh out loud within months of being born. I would say that laughter is your birthright, a natural part of life that is innate and inborn. Here are two bible verses to keep in mind:

“... he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. John 8:29

“...be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” Hebrews 13:5

Take a moment and picture your heavenly Father and his Son. What do you see? Do you see faces that are stern, stiff and always serious or ones that are smiling expressing empathy, love and grace? The faces that you see are simply expressions of the God you know and worship!



Seminar Report

In the month of November, 2016, Restoration Ministries hosted our first Bible seminar. It is our intention to have more of these in the future, possibly on an annual basis.

The aim of this seminar was help those who attended to understand the vital points of the truths which we believe and to show the vital connection which they have to the plan of salvation. We also aimed to show the harmony and logical connections between each aspect of the message.

Our focus was on the following themes:

1. The nature and identity of God
2. Understanding the law and its nature
3. The Two Adams
4. Understanding the gospel
5. The gift of the holy spirit

November was not the ideal time to have this seminar, it is in the middle of the school term and so it was difficult for many of our young people to attend. However, this seminar had been in the planning for a while and the idea had been to host it during the summer. When this did not materialize, we decided to go ahead and have it, regardless of the challenges of the timing, believing that if we made a start some people would attend and it would help us to come to grips with the challenges involved in hosting such a seminar.

The Lord did bless. We publicized our intention to have this seminar and were pleasantly surprised to discover that a few of our young people would be able to attend, plus one or two of the older ones. Some could attend on certain days, but not for the full time. What was most encouraging however, was that several

persons from overseas expressed the desire to attend and we eventually ended up with six people from Canada, several of whom were young people, not yet in their twenties. Brothers Willy, Abe and Corny, and sister Tina were all from the same family, while Joe was related by marriage. They all came from Alberta. Brother Paul, however, was from the other side of Canada all the way from Toronto.

The presentations were good, not only for those who were students, but also for Brother Howard and myself (David Clayton) who were in charge of the classes. It was a blessing to have these truths refreshed in my mind, my faith was revived and my thoughts refocused.

Video recordings will be available eventually, but not very soon because there were twenty-eight interactive sessions and each video will require some editing. We will let you know when these videos are ready.



Open Face

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