
THE SOWER

ARTHUR CHURCH OF CHRIST

415 W. 4TH STREET
ARTHUR, IL 61911
Ron Bartanen, Evangelist

DECEMBER 20, 2020

Have you visited our web site lately? (www.Arthurcoc.com)

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

While the Pharisees questioned Jesus, testing Him, Jesus challenged them with a momentous question: “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” (Matthew 22:42). They responded with reference to the Old Testament prophecies that foretold that the Christ (the anointed messiah that would come) would be “the Son of David,” to whom would be granted the throne of David over Israel. Jesus followed with a second question: “How then doth David in spirit (by spiritual inspiration) call him Lord, saying, the LORD (God, the Father) said unto my Lord (the messiah), Sit thou on my right hand (enthroned with the Father) till I make thy enemies thy footstool? If David then calls him Lord, how is he his son?” Jesus’ response had left them speechless. The only obvious answer was that the Christ would not only be a son or descendant of King David, but at the same time He would be the Son of God.

While many likened Jesus to some of the prior prophets (mere mortals), the disciples of Jesus acknowledged Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:13-17). In all of earth’s history, only one individual can truthfully be regarded as both a “Son of man” and “the Son of God”—both fully human and fully divine, with Mary, a virgin, as His mother, and God as His

Father. It was even as an angel broke the news to Mary: “[Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:31-32a), and as the angel of the Lord explained to Joseph, her betrothed, “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And ye shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20b-21). Only in this manner could the Creator become a part of His creation, and vicariously die, the Just for the unjust, to redeem His creation. At the time of the sin in Eden, God made the promise of deliverance through the “seed” of the woman (Genesis 3:15), not the seed of the man. The seed of the woman would defeat Satan. We see the same promise given 700 years before Christ was born, as the “messianic prophet”, Isaiah writes, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)” (Isaiah 7:14; cf. Matthew 1:22-23). The apostle Paul would later speak of the virgin-born Christ as “made of a woman” (Galatians 4:4) that He might redeem us from sin, thus qualifying us, through the merit of Christ, to be accepted as the children of God (v. 5). Such is the glorious message of both the Old and New Testaments, as summarized by Paul as he

wrote the young evangelist, Timothy: “*And without controversy God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory*” (1 Timothy 3:16).

How would you answer Christ: “*What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?*”
--Ron

May God grant to you and yours a MERRY CHRISTMAS!

THE TWO-SIDED CROSS

The cross was a two-sided structure. It was both ugly and beautiful. It was ugly because our sins were hanging there in the personage of Jesus.... It was beautiful because it was our Savior hanging there, dying for our sins. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:4). It was ugly in that it meant horrible suffering for the Son of God, suffering beyond our wildest imagination. It was beautiful because it portrayed in the most graphic way the love and grace of God extended to us. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:16-17).

As Jesus was lifted up on the cross atop the hill of Calvary, God was reaching down to the valley of our despair and hopelessness. It was the nature of the event taking place there that made it both ugly and beautiful at the same time: ugly in that it was sin—the sin of those who physically perpetrated the act, your sins and my sins---that nailed him there...but beautiful in what it did for us!

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame:
And I love that old cross
Where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

--Olden Cook, *The Voice of Truth International, Vol. 5; via the Wadsworth, Ohio church bulletin*

FAITH—

- Its source: the word of God (Romans 10:17; 1:16).
- Its impact on life: repentance of sin (Luke 13:3; 24:47).
- Its openness: to be confessed (Romans 10:8-11; Acts 8:36-37). (Next column)
- Its identification with Christ: in baptism-“for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), identifying with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4); to “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).
- Its manifestation throughout life: the “obedience of faith” (Romans 16:24-26).

The Christian life is a walk of faith, from beginning to it’s end. The Lord’s promise is: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). —Ron

A VOICE FROM THE PAST—

“Unto Him Who is the author and giver of all good, I render sincere and humble thanks for His manifold unmerited blessings, especially for our redemption and salvation by His beloved Son.... Blessed be His holy name.” (John Jay, Author of The Federalist Papers, original Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, via *The Founders’ Bible*)

“WHAT WE SEE IN JESUS” (Part 2) will be today’s message, with Philippians 2:5-11 for the reading.

PRAY FOR: Doris remains in rehab as she undergoes therapy. We are considering the possibility of both of us entering an assisted living facility after her release. We hope she will be able to get around sufficiently for that so she won’t have to go to a nursing home. Some have sent cards to her to our Sullivan address, but it would be better to send them to Shelbyville Rehabilitation Center, 2116 W. S. 3rd, Room 405, Shelbyville, IL 62565. *** Ruby Bradd (Clinton; recovering from cancer). I spoke with her father Monday, and he said she is doing very well, for which we can thank God. *** Continue in prayer for Wayne Polk (Shelbyville minister; health problems). *** Pray for those adversely affected by COVID19, including not only those with the virus and families who have lost loved ones due to the virus, but also those affected by loss of jobs or financially affected in their businesses.