

RABBI, TEACHER, MASTER

John 3:2

INTRODUCTION

- Can you imagine a world without teachers and without teaching?
- Humanity would be reduced to nothing more than base animals, functioning purely by instinct to survive
- It would be a world without art, language, communication, science
- From the moment we are born we begin learning from our first teachers, our parents, and the rest of our lives is a continual process of learning until we die
- Teachers are vital to our existence, but not all teachers are the same and not all teaching is the same
- There is bad teaching which is contrary to truth, beauty and goodness, and will lead us into a path of ruin and destruction
- The worst of these false teachers is the devil himself, whose deceitful teaching led Eve first, then Adam to sin and bring the curse upon the creation
- In our day false teachers abound, spreading their lies in classrooms, in government, in the media, on the internet, even as the apostle warned: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13)
- In due time, a global leader will arise, called the son of perdition, the antichrist, the beast and the man of sin, who will deceive the world into worshipping him and taking his mark, and thereby bring damnation upon themselves (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)
- It is vital that we take heed to the exhortation of Proverbs 19:27 – "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

- But there is one Teacher that we can trust implicitly, because he possesses all wisdom, and he loves us and desires the best for us
- God is the source of all truth and as the Teacher of mankind, has conveyed that truth to humanity, generally through the creation, but specially through the Scriptures
- When God chose out a people for his name, the nation of Israel, he gave them his law, which was his teaching them what his will was for them (Exodus 24:12)
- God's purpose was that through Israel, all the nations of the world would learn of Jehovah and learn his will for them (Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 60:2-3)
- To those who fear the LORD and trust in him, God is their teacher, guiding them in the way he has prepared for them (Psalm 25:12; 32:8)
- The primary means by which God instructs his people is by his word, delivered through his prophets and written in the Scriptures
- But 2000 years ago, God brought his revelation to mankind in the ultimate form – by his Son in human flesh
- “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- We know why Christ came to this earth – to redeem man through his atoning death
- But a necessary part of his ministry was to teach and preach
 - ✓ Preach the gospel message of eternal life through faith in his atonement
 - ✓ Teach his disciples the doctrine of the New Covenant, which they then would teach after his ascension

- Many unbelievers in the world are prepared to say that Jesus was a “good teacher”
- If asked which of his particular teachings were “good”, they might suggest:
 - ✓ “Love one another”
 - ✓ “Judge not, that ye be not judged”
 - ✓ “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”
- But would they still call him a good teacher when he says:
 - ✓ Without repentance you shall perish (Luke 13:5)
 - ✓ God will destroy sinners in hell (Matthew 23:33; 10:28)
 - ✓ Unbelievers are condemned (John 3:18)
 - ✓ There is no eternal life apart from Jesus Christ (John 14:6)
- Today we will consider how the Lord Jesus Christ is the Supreme Teacher

I. CHRIST IS THE SUPREME TEACHER IN HIS AUTHORITY

- A. We are in desperate need to be taught the truth
1. Man, in his natural state, is in deception and lies, and is against the truth (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:25)
 2. It not until we acknowledge our ignorance and need of God’s teaching that may be brought out of our deception to the truth and its lifegiving power
 3. Nicodemus thought he had knowledge, but he needed to be instructed
 4. Many people are like this, not realising their ignorance (Revelation 3:17-18)
 5. Many times Jesus had to rebuke and correct the faulty understanding of his disciples (Matthew 16:21-24; 20:20-28; Luke 9:52-56)

B. Christ is called Rabbi

1. "Rabbi" is a title of honour among the Jews, denoting more than merely a teacher, but an authority over another
2. The Greek word is translated both as "Rabbi" and "Master" in the New Testament (Matthew 23:7-8; 26:25,49; Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; John 1:38,49; 3:2,26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8)
3. "Rabboni" is of Chaldean origin while "Rabbi" is of Hebrew origin (John 20:16)
4. Christ took this title to himself, but forbade the disciples to take it upon themselves (Matthew 23:8)

C. Christ is called Teacher

1. Teacher (*didaskalos*) is an instructor and is also translated as "master" and "doctor"
2. This term is used both of Christ and of teachers in the church

D. Christ has all authority to teach

1. As the Messiah, Jesus was anointed of the Father to perform his ordained work, which included preaching the gospel (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18)
2. The people who heard him teach recognised the authority with which he spoke
3. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."
(Matthew 7:28-29)
4. In the Sermon on the Mount, he repeatedly contrasted the Jewish Rabbis teaching with his own, saying, "Ye have heard that it hath been said...but I say unto you..." (Matthew 5:21-22,27-28,31-34,38-39,43-44)

5. Even his enemies marvelled at the authority of his words: “Never man spake like this man!” (John 7:45-46)
6. Yet unlike the Jewish Rabbis, he had no formal training or education – his wisdom is divine (Matthew 13:54-58)

II. CHRIST IS THE SUPREME TEACHER IN HIS VERITY

- A. Christ clearly stated that his teaching came directly from God (John 12:49)
- B. Christ is the truth and came to bear witness of the truth
 1. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)
 2. He is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14,17)
 3. He came into this world to bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37)
 4. The greatest opposition that Christ faced was from the Jews who, inspired by the father of lies, could not allow him to preach the truth (John 8:38-47)
- C. Christ came to both preach and teach the truth (Matthew 4:23; 9:35)
 1. There are many similarities between preaching and teaching, but they are not identical
 2. Preaching is the invitational and exhortational proclamation of biblical and theological truth
 3. Teaching is the explanation and explication of biblical and theological truth
 4. But they both are a setting forth of Biblical truth

III. CHRIST IS THE SUPREME TEACHER IN HIS CLARITY

- A. There has never been a teacher like Jesus Christ; he is the greatest teacher that ever walked the earth
 - 1. Every word he spoke had significance and weight – none were superfluous
 - 2. Every word he spoke was perfectly true, divinely inspired
 - 3. Every word he spoke was appropriate to his audience, exactly what they needed to hear, when they needed to hear it

- B. The style of Jesus' teaching was also unmatched by any other
 - 1. At times he taught the people using direct and plain language (Matthew 5-7)
 - 2. Other times he used parables that only his disciples could understand (Matthew 13:10-17)
 - 3. He taught by using probing questions (Matthew 16:13-16; 22:41-46)
 - 4. He taught by example (John 13:4-5,14; 1 Peter 2:21)
 - 5. He sometimes even taught by his silence (John 8:6-9; Luke 22:60-62)

- C. He taught wherever he was, whatever the location
 - 1. On a mountain (Matthew 5:1-2)
 - 2. From a boat (Luke 5:1-3)
 - 3. In the synagogues (Matthew 9:35)
 - 4. In the temple (Luke 19:47)

- D. The Sermon on the Mount is perhaps the greatest example of the supreme excellence of Christ's teaching

5:1-11 The Beatitudes

5:13-16 Salt and light

5:17-20 Jesus the fulfillment of the law
5:21-26 On anger
5:27-30 On adultery
5:31-32 On divorce
5:33-37 On oaths
5:38-42 On retaliation
5:43-48 On loving our enemies
6:1-4 Almsgiving
6:5-14 Prayer
6:16-18 Fasting
6:19-24 Laying up treasures in heaven
6:25-34 On worry and trust
7:1-5 Judging others
7:7-11 Ask, seek, knock
7:12 The Golden Rule
7:13-14 The narrow way and the broad way
7:15-20 A tree and its fruit
7:21-23 I never knew you
7:24-27 The house on the rock and the house on the sand

IV. CHRIST IS THE SUPREME TEACHER IN HIS HUMILITY

- A. A remarkable feature of Christ's life and teaching is his humility
1. Of all the people who ever lived, Christ alone had the right to exalt himself over others
 2. Yet he did the opposite, making himself a servant to others
 3. The meekness and humility of Christ's ministry was prophesied by Isaiah: "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench" (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 12:18-21)
 4. Christ's ministry was largely to the lowly, common people, not the elites of his day
 - a. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to

them.” (Matthew 11:5)

- b. The common people heard him gladly (Mark 12:37)
 - c. The truth was hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes (Matthew 11:25)
 - d. The Jewish leaders sought to kill Jesus, but the multitude took him for a prophet (Matthew 21:46; Luke 19:48)
- B. We are to learn of Christ’s humility
- 1. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:25-30)
 - 2. The same humble, servant, sacrificial mind of Christ, shown by his life, is to be in us (Philippians 2:5-8)
 - 3. The meekness and gentleness of Christ is at the foundation of our Christian walk and warfare (2 Corinthians 10:1-5)

CONCLUSION

- 1. Do you acknowledge your ignorance, and your need of God to teach you his truth? (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:2)
- 2. Do you pray to God to give you wisdom? (James 1:5)
- 3. Do you make use of the means God has provided to learn his will for your life?
 - ✓ By reading and studying Scripture
 - ✓ By attending the preaching and teaching in the church
- 4. Having been taught the truth, are you fulfilling your duty to others and teaching them the truth of Jesus Christ, as he commanded you in the Great Commission? (Matthew 28:18-20)