

Title: **I Knew Him Not**
 Text: John 1:31-33
 Subject: *Knowing Christ*
 Date: Sunday Morning — October 29, 2006
 Tape # Z-12b
 Reading: John 1:1-51

Introduction:

One Sunday night, a few months ago, Bro. Darvin Pruitt came into the study and read John 1:31 and 33. He said, “We know that John the Baptist knew Christ, he was his cousin. Yet, twice he said, ‘*I knew him not.*’ What do you suppose that means? What is the significance of that statement?” Well, to make a long story short, none of us had a clue. But these verses have been on my mind almost continually, since that night. I have been studying them and meditating on them, praying that the Lord would be pleased to teach me the meaning of John’s words. I believe he has; and I believe he has given me a message for you.

The Baptist’s Message

In this passage, the apostle John is giving us his inspired account of the ministry of John the Baptist. The Baptist’s message was the proclamation of God’s Christ. He was sent as Elijah, to prepare the way of the Lord. The first thing John the apostle tells us about that great prophet is that he was “*a man sent from God.*” — “*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John*” (v. 6). The only man who can preach the gospel to us is that man who is sent of God with his message (Jer. 23:32; Rom. 10:5). What reason we have to bless God for his goodness in sending a man to tell us about our Savior, the Lord Jesus, proclaiming his great salvation (Isa. 52:7).

(Isaiah 52:7) “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

John the Baptist was sent “*to bear witness of the Light*” (v. 7).

(John 1:7) “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.”

Being a prophet of God, John had only one purpose in life, one function, one work to do, and was useful for only that one thing. — He “*to bear witness of the Light,*” to point sinners to Christ, who alone is the Light of the world. And he would not be turned aside from that one glorious work. It consumed his life. **What a witness he bore of the Light!**

· He declared **Christ’s pre-eminence and eternity** (v. 15).

(John 1:5) “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

- John the Baptist proclaimed that **all the fulness of grace** is in Christ alone (v. 16).

(John 1:16) “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

- Then John asserted that all **grace and truth** come to men only in, by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 17).

(John 1:17) “For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

- In verse 18, the apostle tells us that John the Baptist openly asserted that Christ, who is **alone the Revelation of the triune God**, was **the eternal Word with God in heaven**, even while he was here upon the earth.

(John 1:18) “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.”

The Pharisees’ Questions

Then, in verses 19-28, the apostle John relates a conversation John the Baptist had with some priests and Levites who were sent by the Pharisees to ask him who he was and why he was immersing people.

(John 1:19-28) “And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? (20) And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. (21) And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. (22) Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? (23) He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. (24) And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. (25) And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? (26) John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; (27) He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose. (28) These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.”

The Pharisees were troubled by the fact that John called people to repentance and baptized them in the Jordan river. They viewed themselves as the protectors of the laws, customs and traditions of Israel, and were alarmed by the fact that John was performing a religious ceremony that was entirely new, and even more alarmed because multitudes were submitting themselves to the ordinance of God.

These Pharisees were familiar with and practiced numerous washings (called baptisms), rituals of cleansing in the law. To those legal ceremonies they added many others, requiring the washing of hands before eating, the washing of cups after leaving the market place, and the washing of tables that had been defiled by others. And their traditions were imposed upon the people as if they were the oracles of God (Matt. 15:9).

(Matthew 15:9) “But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.”

They were interested in what John was doing because his teaching of baptism unto repentance by immersion in water was gaining favor among the people and multitudes were partaking of it. They came to see if John was claiming to be the Messiah, Christ himself, Elijah reincarnate, whom Malachi spoke (Mal. 4:5-6), or that Prophet (the Messiah) spoken of by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15. They planned to get to the bottom of the matter.

(Malachi 4:5-6) “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: (6) And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

(Deuteronomy 18:15) “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.”

The idea that the Messiah would come baptizing with water is not really set forth in Scripture. Perhaps the Pharisees were thinking of a couple of verses (Zech 13:1; Ezekiel 36:25) and applying them to the Messiah as if they were the baptism that John was performing.

(Zechariah 13:1) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

(Ezekiel 36:25) “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”

Because they were men who claimed to be looking for the Messiah, the Pharisees may have thought, “Maybe this is the Messiah.”

Though he was Elijah, as our Lord Jesus declares in Matthew 11, (Matt. 11:9-15), John refused to direct any attention to himself. He said, “I am nothing but a voice, crying in the wilderness, *‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’*” His ministry was not about John the Baptist. It was about Christ. He was sent by God to bear witness of Christ (vv. 6-7). His existence was to speak of and preach the glories of Christ. (John 1:23; 3:30; 10:41).

(John 1:23) “He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.”

(John 3:30) “He must increase, but I *must* decrease.”

(John 10:41) “And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.”

Even John’s declaration of what he was doing was intended to draw attention away from himself to Christ (vv. 26-27).

(John 1:26-27) “John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; (27) He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

He was saying that all he did was baptize in water and it was not to be compared with what Christ would do, referring to the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world (Acts 2:1-4).

Now, look at verse 29. Here is John’s message.

(John 1:29) “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

John the Baptist saw the Lord Jesus walking by. When he did, he called for all who heard his voice to **behold** him, trust him and follow him, who is **the Lamb of God**.

- The Lamb Accepted of God
- The Lamb Typified — In the Garden — On Moriah — The Passover
- The Lamb Prophesied (Isa. 53)
- The Lamb Slain

Our Lord Jesus Christ is “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 13:8). Scripture is filled with pictures, prophecies, and descriptions of Christ as the Lamb of God (Exo. 12; Lev. 9:3; Isaiah 53:7; Rev. 5:6). He is the Lamb who is God and the Lamb of God’s own providing (Rom. 3:25). God himself gives what he requires, requires only what he gives, and always accepts what he gives.

He said this Lamb, by the virtue of his sacrifice “*taketh away the sin of the world.*” That is to say, he is taking away the sin of the world perpetually, now and forever, o by an eternally perpetual and effectual act. As the sun shines and the spring runs without interruption, so Christ takes away the sin of his people scattered through all the world perpetually! Let that be the perpetual picture we have of him! **As we multiply sins, he multiplies pardons** (Zech. 13:1; Isa. 55:7).

(Isaiah 55:7) “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

(Zechariah 13:1) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

All this, John the Baptist preached, and I preach to you today, “*that all men through him might believe*” (v. 7). Gospel preachers are men sent of God, preaching the grace and glory of God in

Christ the Redeemer, as instruments by whom others believe. — *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”*

Our Text

It is important for us to remember is that all this was done, and all these words of John the Baptist were spoken, after he had baptized the Lord Jesus. Now, let’s look at verses 31-33.

(John 1:31-33) “And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. (32) And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. (33) And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”

This is, in reality, John the Baptist’s recollection of meeting Christ in the flesh. When he said, *“I knew him not”*, he was not saying I had not yet met him in person. John the Baptist was not only God’s prophet, he was the Savior’s cousin. He had been brought up with him. His mother, Elizabeth, who called the Lord Jesus her Lord when she welcomed Mary into her home, had (we may be sure) often told John about him. Surely, she would have described the Savior’s wondrous birth many times, as she spoke to her son, whom she knew would be his forerunner. Elizabeth must have often reminded John of how he leaped in her womb for joy when Mary came to him with her Lord and his in her womb (Luke 1:39-45).

Though we have no record of it, it is likely that John and the Lord Jesus were often together as they grew up. There is no question that John knew who the Savior was, and that he was morally convinced that he was the Christ of God. When the Lord Jesus came to be baptized by him, *“John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”* (Matt. 3:14).

After the Flesh

What, then, is the meaning of John’s twice repeated statement to the Pharisees — *“I knew him not?”* He was saying to the Pharisees. If you will look back at verse 26, you will get a hint.

(John 1:26-27) “John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; (27) He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

John was saying, I was once in the same boat you are in. Though I knew much about the Son of God by the instructions of my parents, though I was, like you, looking for the Messiah, the Christ of God, of whom the prophets spoke, though I knew I knew him after the flesh, I did not know him.

He was saying, “Until he was revealed to me by God the Holy Spirit, I had not beheld him, but now I do. I knew him not; but now I know him. He walks among you. He is the One with whom you have to do; but you know him not. You do not need to be concerned about who I am. You

need to be concerned about who he is! I am nobody, just a voice, a noise in the wilderness; but he who walks among you is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Do not concern yourself with my baptism, concern yourself with his.”

These things are “*written for our learning, that were through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*” (Rom. 15:4). Mat God the Holy Spirit, who caused them to be written, use them for that end.

There is no doubt that prior to his birth, implanted in his mind and heart was the message of the Messiah. I would not attempt to explain this, John the Baptist was a prophet from his mother’s womb; and he knew Christ by special revelation even when he was in her womb, leaping for joy because of his incarnation (Luke 1:41, 44).

(Jeremiah 1:5) “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

(Luke 1:41) “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.”

(Luke 1:44) “For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.”

John’s knowledge of Christ was a miracle of grace, which is basically the meaning of his name, John, “God has graced, or Jehovah is gracious.” The Lord is wonderful in the detail of his word. Yet, when he says, “*I knew him not,*” he was in fact saying that it had not yet been revealed that this man, his cousin, was the Christ, but now he had been revealed to him as the Lamb of God and the Son of God.

Christ Revealed

How was the Lord Jesus revealed and made known to John the Baptist as the Christ, the Lamb of God and the Son of God? The fact that he emphatically declares, and declares twice, “*I knew him not,*” is of paramount importance because John uses it as the background for the explanation he gives in 33-34 of how he came to recognize that this man from Nazareth is the Son of God, the Messiah, the One for whom he was sent to bear witness, and to prepare the way.

(John 1:31-34) “And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. (32) And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. (33) And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (34) And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

He is saying, “Though I knew him not, I now know him by the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, and by the faith God has given me.” He recognized Christ for who He was based on the

word of God (vv. 31-34). He once knew Christ after the flesh, but no more. Now, he knew him after the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:16).

(2 Corinthians 5:14-17) “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: (15) And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. (16) Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. (17) Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

By the Word of God

First, John knew Christ by the Word of God. God himself had described the Lord Jesus with such clarity that there could be no mistake as to Who he was, once he was revealed. He said, either by an articulate voice, or by a divine impulse on his mind, or by the revelation of the Spirit, “*Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*” This is a plainly revealed fact: — Faith in Christ is conveyed to chosen, redeemed sinners by God the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 4:12; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23-25).

(Romans 10:17) “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

(Hebrews 4:12) “For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

(James 1:18) “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

(1 Peter 1:23-25) “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (24) For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: (25) But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

The Catalyst

The Word of God, the gospel of Christ, is the power of God unto salvation, the catalyst God uses to give sinners life and faith in Christ (Rom. 1:16).

(Romans 1:16) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

A catalyst is an agent of action. If a chemist desires to unite two substances to create another, in many cases, a catalyst is necessary. The catalyst does not cause the union and never enters into the union of those substances. But without the presence of that specific catalyst the union would

never take place and could not continue. That is exactly what the preaching of the gospel is in God's saving operations.

Without question, were it his pleasure to do so, God almighty could have chosen to save sinners without the use of any means or agency of any kind. Had he chosen to do so, he could have sent angels to pull us into heaven by our noses, once atonement was made for us. But that is not his pleasure.

The Lord God has chosen to regenerate and call chosen, redeemed sinners through the agency of gospel preaching. The fact that God has so ordained it makes the preaching of the gospel the catalyst necessary for the communication of his saving grace.

I know that many cry out against this and say, "That limits God's sovereignty. That makes salvation depend upon man." Do not be so foolish as to be found fighting against God.

We must never force the Scriptures to mean what we want them to mean. We must never bend the Word of God to our doctrinal notions and theological system. Rather, we bow to God's Word. We cannot extol and honor God if we refuse to submit our reason to his Revelation.

Carefully read the Scriptures once more. It is impossible to read the following passages in their context without concluding that regeneration and faith in Christ, gifts of God the Holy Spirit and operations of his irresistible grace, are communicated to chosen, redeemed sinners through the instrumentality of gospel preaching (Rom. 1:15-17; 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13; 1 Tim. 4:12-16; Heb. 4:12; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). In each of those passages the Lord God plainly declares that it is his purpose and pleasure to save his elect through the preaching of the gospel.

Perhaps you think, "What if one of God's elect is in a remote barbarian tribe in the jungles of New Guinea where no gospel preacher has ever been?" I can see how that would create a problem, except for one thing — There are no problems with God! He knows exactly how to get his prophet to the people to whom he has purposed to show his mercy. Just ask Jonah!

We preach the gospel with a sense of urgency, knowing that sinners cannot believe on Christ until Christ is preached to them. Yet, we preach with confidence of success, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). God's Word will not return to him void. It will accomplish his will and prosper in the thing it is sent to do (Isa. 55:11). Every chosen, redeemed sinner must be regenerated and called by the Holy Spirit. And that work will be accomplished through the preaching of the gospel.

The Spirit of God

But, if we would know Christ, there must be more than the Word of God. We must have the Word made effectual to us by the power and grace of God the Holy Spirit. Look at our text again. Not only did John the Baptist have the testimony of God's Word, he had God's Word confirmed to him personally by the Holy Spirit. — He saw, as God said he would, "*the Spirit descending and remaining on*" the Lord Jesus. Is this not the work of God the Holy Spirit? Is this not exactly what he has done for us in? — (See John 14:22-23; 15:26; 16:8-11, 13-15).

(John 14:22-23) “Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? (23) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

(John 15:26) “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

(John 16:8-11) “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (9) Of sin, because they believe not on me; (10) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; (11) Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

(John 16:13-15) “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. (14) He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you. (15) All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show *it* unto you.”

Faith in Christ

Then, as soon as Christ was revealed, he saw, he beheld Christ, he knew him by the gift of faith. This is what he tells us in verse 34. — “*And I saw, and bare record (confessed) that this is the Son of God.*”

In the new birth, in the conversion of sinners, this is always the divinely ordained equation: the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and faith in Christ. All are the gifts of God’s grace. All are necessary. And all are made effectual to the saving of our souls by the grace of God.

The words of John the apostle, explaining the experience of John the Baptist, were prophetic of every believer’s experience of grace! When John baptized the Lord Jesus and he saw the saw crowned by God the Father, with a voice from heaven and the Spirit descending on him as a dove, he understood that “*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*” (v. 14). He recognized this man from Galilee for who he was, based on the Word of God and by the revelation of God. And he saw, in the baptism of our Lord the symbolic picture of righteousness fulfilled by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as the sinners Substitute (Matt. 3:13-17).

(Matthew 3:13-17) “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. (14) But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. (16) And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (17) And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

As if to reiterate this truth, John tells us that those first men who were found of Christ, who found him by the faith he gave them when he made himself known to them, experienced the same thing (vv. 35-37, 40-41, 43-45, 49).

(John 1:35-37) “Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; (36) And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! (37) And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”

(John 1:40-41) “One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. (41) He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.”

(John 1:43-45) “The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. (44) Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. (45) Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

(John 1:49) “Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”

There is yet another distinction concerning the revelation of Christ by the Spirit, though the Word. In verse 26 John the Baptist said to the Pharisees, “I know him *whom ye know not*.” Looking at this entire chapter, and others like it, we see that Christ is revealed to those sinners he has chosen, redeemed, and called (Acts 2:39; 13:48; Gal. 1:15-16; 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:16).

(Acts 2:39) “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

(Acts 13:48) “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

(Galatians 1:15-16) “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called *me* by his grace, (16) To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:”

(1 Thessalonians 1:4-5) “Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (5) For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:13) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

(2 Corinthians 5:16) “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.”

Gospel Preaching

All true preaching is, for this reason, limited to the declaration of the Gospel. It is by the preaching of the Gospel that the Word of God is declared to men (1 Pet. 1:25). The preaching of the Gospel, the preaching of the Word of God is the declaration of a Person, the declaration of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the King of Israel, the sinner's Savior. It is declaring record that God has given concerning his Son (Romans 1:1-3).

(Romans 1:1-3) "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (2) (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) (3) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."

- It is the declaration of **a unique Person**; a man who is like no other; a man who lived like no other, spoke like no other, and died like no other.
- It is the declaration of **a man who is himself God**.
- It is the declaration of the eternal Surety of a chosen people.
- It is the description of the God-man, **who came into the world to seek and save that which was lost**, who came into the world to save sinners.
- It is the description of **Jehovah's Servant**, the Christ, who finished the work that he came to do.
- It is the declaration of **Jesus the Savior, who saved** all whom he came to save, who **lost none** who were given to him by the Father, but **raised them up** in the last day.
- It is the declaration of man, that wonderful man, who lived among sinners **without sin**, who was **made sin** for us and is **made the righteousness** of God unto us.
- It is the description of that man who was and is the **Friend of sinners**.
- It is the declaration of him **who "shall not fail,"** for whom failure is never a possibility.
- It is the description of him **who died, and was buried, and rose again that he might be Lord** of both the living and the dead.
- It is the description of him who is, at this moment, **seated on the right hand of the majesty on high**, ruling with absolute sway over everything that wriggles and writhes in the whole universe ruling in calm repose. — "*He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee*" (Num. 23:9).
- It is the description of him **whose words are spirit** and they are life.

- It is the description of him **about whom every line**, every word, every jot and every tittle of the Bible is written.
- It is the description of him who, by the sacrifice of himself, has **put away our sins** and has *“made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”*
- It is the description of him who **satisfied the law and justice of God** for his people so fully, so infinitely, that the Judge of the all the earth declares them never to have sinned and accepts them fully as sons and daughters!
- It is the declaration, the description of him **who is made of God unto us** wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.
- It is the description of **him for whom heaven opens and the voice of God declares** *“this is my beloved son, hear ye him.”*

We preach him, and preach him and preach him, so that when he comes to his chosen, his redeemed, his called, they will immediately recognize him for who he is and cry with old Thomas, *“my Lord and my God!”* We preach that those who hear can say, “I knew him not, but I now know him,” because the Word of God has described him so fully that none other will fit the description, because the Spirit of God has revealed him in me, and has given me faith to know and trust him! When he comes to his own, their testimony is that God has hung flesh on his Word and *“we behold his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!”*. We keep on preaching him so that every nook and cranny of the believer’s existence will be immersed in him (Romans 11:36).

(Romans 11:36) “For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

We preach him so that every turn of providence, every happenstance, circumstance and every occurrence will be seen as his hand of love and tender care (Romans 8:28; Col. 1:16-17).

(Romans 8:28) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

(Colossians 1:16-17) “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: (17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

I often hear people extolling preachers for being so “practical,” for teaching practical truths on how to live the Christian life. They tell how the preacher comforts them and makes their struggles easier. They talk about how their pastor preaches in an understandable manner, showing them what to do and not do in order to be real Christians. But in all the preacher praise and promotion I hear, seldom do I hear a man praised because he preaches Christ fully and clearly, in all his redeeming, saving glory.

Illustration: “*Very poor sermon... Christ was not in it.*”

The Bible may be used to show men and women what to do and what not to do. It is full of moral principles. Peoples lives will be radically changed, if they abide by the principles that are taught. They will probably never be sent to the penitentiary. Moral teachings, however, focus on you. They fix the mind and the eye on self and looking at one’s self. But they will never cause anyone to know Christ in grace or in providence. We preach Christ and him crucified, so that if a person sees him he will know who he is and will not praise the preacher but the One who is preached (1 Cor. 2:2-5; 2 Cor. 4:5-6).

(1 Corinthians 2:2-5) “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. (4) And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

(2 Corinthians 4:5-6) “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Illustration: Joseph Parker — “*What a great preacher he is.*” Spurgeon — “*What a great Christ he preaches.*”

Can you say, with John the Baptist, “*I knew him not*” but now I know him because the Spirit of God has opened and applied to me the Word of God, giving me faith in him who is the Christ of God”?

(2 Corinthians 5:16-17) “Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. (17) Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Amen.