

WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 8

THE PERSON OF JESUS

The Bible explains that God Himself became flesh, became human to show us what kind of person God is. Jesus said, “Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:6). Colossians 1:15 says, “Christ is the image of the invisible God.” So, when we see Jesus, we see God the Father. As we said before Baptists hold fundamentally to the doctrine that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. Jesus made several claims about Himself. Do *[Question 10]* on your own. We’ve already looked at some of Jesus’ claims earlier, so we won’t go over it again.

I want us to look now at the authority that was given to Jesus by God the Father. *[Question 11]* Take a look at some of the scriptures that show us the authority that Jesus had:

“For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will” (John 5:21). Jesus says that He gives **life** to anyone He wants.

“For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). Jesus says that He will **judge** mankind. We saw earlier that Jesus is coming back to judge. That authority was given to Him by the Father.

Now we come to the story about the paralytic who was let down through a hole in the roof by his friends. “‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’— He [Jesus] then said to the paralytic—‘Rise, pick up your bed and go home’” (Matthew 9:6). Jesus says that He can **forgive** sins.

Jesus is talking to the woman at the well. “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life” (John 6:47). Jesus tells the woman that He gives **eternal** life to those who believe.

Philippians Chapter 2 contains that great passage about how Jesus is highly exalted and that God has bestowed on Him a name that is above every name... “and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11). The Bible says that everyone will confess Jesus as **Lord**. Everyone will confess Him as Lord; not as boss or as the big man upstairs or any of that. He is Lord, Master.

In John Chapter 14 Jesus is with His disciples in the upper room the night before His betrayal. He will soon go to the cross. He’s talking to them and He knows that He is going to be leaving them soon. He says: “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

[Question 12] What three promises does Jesus make to His disciples and to those of us who follow Him? I have given you the first letters: P, C and T to help you out.

That He will **Prepare** a place for us; That He will **Come again**; That He will **Take** us to Himself.

We refer to Jesus as the Son of God. As has been mentioned before, we Baptists believe that Jesus is God. In *[Question 13]* notice the characteristics of Jesus that we attribute to God:

“But Jesus on His part did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people” (John 2:24). Jesus always knows what’s in the heart and what people are thinking. So, the answer is **A**, He’s all knowing.

The next passage in Matthew Chapter 8 is where Jesus calms the storm. “And [Jesus] said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?’ Then He rose and rebuked the winds and the sea,

and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey Him?'" (Matthew 8:26-27). According to this passage what does it tell us about Jesus? **B**, He's in control of nature. This is no ordinary man!

The setting for the next passage from John Chapter 11 is when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. "When [Jesus] had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.' Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in Him (John 11:43-45). So, what does this passage tell us about Jesus? **C**, He can raise the dead to life. Like I said, He is no ordinary man! How many people does the scripture say Jesus raised from the dead? Three that we are told about, but very possibly there were more.

The last passage is in Matthew Chapter 8. This is the story of Jesus throwing the demons into the herd of pigs. "And behold, they [the demons] cried out, 'What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?' Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. 'And the demons begged him, saying, 'If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.' And He [Jesus] said to them, 'Go.' So, they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters" (Matthew 8:29-32). What does that tell us about Jesus? **D**, He has power over demons.

JESUS LIVING IN BELIEVERS

Jesus Christ is more than just a historical figure (though He is that). He is more than just one who lived a perfect, sinless life (though He did). He performed great miracles. He showed us the Father. He died tragically. He was gloriously resurrected and He

ascended back to Heaven. Though all these things are true about Jesus, what I want to emphasize is that Jesus desires to be our personal Lord and Savior. He wants to save us. He wants to have a relationship with us. He wants to have fellowship with us. It is very important that we understand this.

Let me remind you what the Baptist Faith and Message says under the heading "God the Son," referring to Jesus. We read this earlier: "In whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man... He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord."

Why did Jesus go to the cross and die for us? Why would He do that? Love. - Jesus loves us (present tense) and He wants to have a relationship with us - with you and with me. This is really an overwhelming thought. Why would He want to have a relationship with me?

Colossians says that Jesus reconciled us to God. We have talked about that term reconciliation before. "And through Him [Jesus] to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:20). Whenever you hear about the "blood" of Jesus in the Bible that is a reference to His death on the cross.

There is a passage in Revelation that is often misunderstood. In Revelation Chapter 3 Jesus is pictured standing outside the door and knocking. There is a very famous painting by Holman Hunt that captures this image of Jesus. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If **anyone** hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to **him** and eat with **him**, and **he** with Me" (Revelation 3:20). In *[Question 14]* you can fill in those words.

What I want you to see here is that Jesus is NOT knocking on the sinner's door asking to be let in so that He can save them. That's not what's going on in this passage. It is often interpreted that way because people take this passage and read it out of

context. Jesus is not asking the sinner to repent here. No, this is part of Jesus's message to the church at Laodicea. Jesus is knocking on the door of the CHURCH! He is wanting the Christians inside to let Him in. Now, why is Jesus standing outside His own church and knocking? In Hunt's painting there is no latch on the outside of the door where you could open it from the outside. It must be opened from the inside. So, why then is Jesus on the outside knocking to be let in? This is a message to the lukewarm church at Laodicea. Many in the churches today (like the church at Laodicea) have locked Jesus out of their lives. It's actually a sad painting. When you understand the context of the passage this is a sad commentary on the church and many believers today. Jesus wants to come in and have fellowship with you and with me because He loves us! But so many of us believers in the church today have locked Him out, just like that church at Laodicea. There's a Christian chorus that we sometimes sing: "Come have your way among us. We welcome you here, Lord Jesus." That should be our desire.

[Question 15] The Christian life is more than difficult; it is humanly... **C**, Impossible. The Christian life is NOT us Christians trying to imitate Christ, trying our best to be more like Jesus - "I have to do this!" Rather, it is Christ living His life through us. Paul said it this way: "Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20); "Christ dwells in our hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:17); "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). When Christians say things like "Jesus lives in my heart," it's more than just a warm spiritual feeling. Jesus living in us or "indwelling" us is more than that. The Bible sometimes says the "Spirit of Christ" lives inside believers (Romans 8:9). But more often it says the "Spirit of God" (Romans 8:9) or just the "Holy Spirit" is in us, such as in 1 Corinthians 6:19. All those phrases mean the same thing. When we believe in Jesus Christ and, by faith, we make Him our Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit, God Himself, begins to dwell, to live in us. That's the concept I want you to grasp. God establishes a

relationship with us that is so close that we become one with Him. He is in us and we are in Him. I would say that's a pretty close relationship! That's the relationship God wants to have with us. That's why that painting by Holman Hunt of Jesus knocking on the door is so sad.

The apostle John says in First John, "[We] are from God and have overcome [the world and all of its sinful fleshly desires], for He [God] who is in [us] is greater than he [the devil] who is in the world" (1 John 4:4 with my own clarification added). So then, Christ lives in us and through us by the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit. John tells us that Jesus abides in us by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us (1 John 3:24). So, there you have it. Jesus lives in us!

The goal of a Christian should be to become more and more like Jesus. Do you want to have the characteristics of Jesus? Galatians 5:22-23 give us "the fruit of the Spirit." We know what these are from earlier in our study - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. A Spirit-controlled life always produces the fruit of the Spirit, which makes us more like Jesus.

By contrast the Bible tells us what is in the human heart naturally. It's not like we need a reminder of how we were before we got saved. All you have to do is walk around or turn on the TV or just drive down the highway and you see on display how you were before you came to Christ. "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21-22).

[Question 16] What kinds of things are in the human heart? Everything on this list applies. Go ahead and **check them all.** This is certainly not an all-inclusive list. Paul tells us in Romans

7:18 that “nothing good” dwells in us. When you get right down to it, we were no different than that thief on the cross!

I just wanted to drive home the stark contrast between who we are naturally, apart from Christ, and how Jesus changes us into someone who is completely different, “a new creation” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). We ought to be different from the world. People out there should be able to spot us a mile away. “There goes one of those Christians again!”

Back to John Chapter 15. Again, Jesus is in the upper room with His disciples just before He goes to the cross. He’s having one last time of great fellowship with them. He’s teaching all of these wonderful truths and He says this to them: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5).

[Question 17] What word appears four times in either the singular or plural? **Abide**. What does this word mean? Based on the analogy Jesus used it means **“to stay connected to.”** So then, we are to stay connected to Jesus. How do we do this? Through His Word. His disciples remembered His words and passed them on orally to the early church. Then the Gospels were written and the rest of the New Testament which preserved Jesus’s words for us.

What happens when branches get disconnected from the vine? They die. Jesus said, “apart from me you can do what? Nothing. In other words, we are totally dependent on Him for our spiritual life.

Let me close by giving you the personal application of the presence of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian... With Christ living in us, as we are filled with the Spirit

and abiding in Him through His word, whenever we face life's many problems (we will sooner or later), He is there with us actively working in our lives. Do [*Question 18*] on your own to drive that point home.

Jesus is alive. He has been raised from the dead; has ascended into Heaven; is now seated at the right hand of God the Father where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, and by whom we have a relationship with God. We are no longer enemies of God, but we are friends, children of God. One day (we can debate when that will be) He will take us to be with Him to live forever in His presence. This is something we look forward to, right? Jesus Christ will return to earth to judge the world as we see in Revelation 19. But in the meantime, Jesus lives in all of us who believe in Him as the living, ever-present Lord. Now, that's shouting ground, isn't it? Like the old hymn says, "Hallelujah, what a Savior!"