

***The Great Sayings in the Gospels***  
***177 - The Conclusion***  
***John 1:1-14***

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
- 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
- 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.
- 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
- 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
- 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
- 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
- 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
- 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

**Introduction:**

I believe that it is necessary, before we leave this great topic of The Great Sayings in the Gospels to put things in perspective and set the Ministry and Work of Jesus in its' proper place both in the flow of God's revelation to man as well as in the history of His Workings among mankind.

Time for us is divided into three parts: before, now, and after. God's Word likewise divides time to us in the Person of Jesus Christ. In our 'before,' what we call "The Beginning" the world and all that is in it, the entire universe in fact, was created by the Person of Jesus Christ. In the 'now' of humanity, God has revealed Himself to us by stages, culminating in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In the 'after' God has determined that the whole of humanity be judged by Jesus Christ for their response to the revelations that have been given.

Acts 17:29-31

- 29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.
- 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:
- 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. KJV

So, there is a very real sense in which Jesus Christ makes up the totality of our before, now, and after. It all revolves around Him and the revelations that God has given through Him, including all those things written by those whom He inspired.

This 'man' Jesus Christ is the pivotal figure of all of human history.

## **I. In the Beginning.**

God created all things; sun, moon, stars, earth, all life upon the earth and the crowning creation, the apex of all that He created, was humanity, at first only a single male human and then a female counterpart made from a portion of the man's body. The two of them were the epitome of human excellence; the most beautiful, the strongest, and the most intelligent of all who would ever bear the designation, 'human.' God literally breathed life into his body, something that He did for no other creature that He made and that 'breath' included, beyond all doubt, not only physical but spiritual existence. He became a 'living soul,' an entity that had entanglements in the spiritual world that we not limited by his body.

There were some very interesting things that happened early on, maybe on the very first day of Adam's life.

Gen 1:26-29

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

Gen 2:8-9

8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Gen 2:15-17

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in

the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Gen 2:20

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field;

There are some things that I want you to recognize about Adam that normally is not discussed when we talk about him.

1. He came here with a brain that was already programmed in many ways.

Ever since him humans have arrived on the planet without a clue as to why they are here or what they are to be doing. Many animals arrive already capable of walking, recognizing their mother, and knowing how to find her and what to do when they find her in order to obtain nourishment. Not so baby humans, they must be taught *everything*.

But Adam arrived knowing how to talk and think, how to organize things into categories and name them, how to tend to the plants that God had given him as his responsibility.

2. Not only that but Adam had a moral sense of what is right and wrong.

Think about it, what good would it do to give a person instructions who had no sense of your authority nor care as to whether you were pleased with him or not?

There are those who believe that Adam knew nothing of God's Law except that he was not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But where did the sense come from that God is to be obeyed?

There is ample evidence to believe that Adam came programmed with full knowledge of the moral and spiritual laws of God as well as with the full awareness of God's right to command and Adam's responsibility to obey.

3. There is also evidence that Adam passed that knowledge to his children.

Adam's first son knew that it was wrong for one man to kill another. He gave evidence of that fact in that he lied to God when questioned about the murder of Abel. Why lie if you do not believe that you have done some wrong worthy of punishment? And, how is God just in punishing him for doing something that he did not know was wrong?

Adam's third son, Seth, led his family to begin to call upon the name of the Lord. By what construction and for what reason? Where would the knowledge have come from that this is a necessary and worthwhile thing to do?

4. When Seth's family abandoned their identity as the 'sons of God' and freely mingled with the rest of humanity (which did not, apparently, call on the Lord) full fledged rebellion against God's Law ensued.

Gen 6:1-6

- 1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,
- 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.
- 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.
- 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.
- 5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

I would submit to you that it made no sense for God to be grieved over the wickedness of people who had no information as to what His Laws were. The very idea of 'wickedness' is a deliberate and conscious rebellion against a standard of righteousness that is known and understood.

5. One family of the descendants of Seth found favor with God.

In Gen 6:21-32 we find a line of descendants beginning with Enoch who 'walked with God.' Please realize that one cannot 'walk with God' any more than he can do 'wickedness' apart from a standard of righteousness.

To him was born Methuselah and to Methuselah was born Lamech and to Lamech, Noah. And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He served his generation and the Lord in two ways. He built an ark for the survival of the animal kingdom against the flood and he preached 'righteousness,' calling upon the people of his world to repent of their sins and follow the Lord God, 2 Pet. 2:5.

6. The way of salvation.

From Adam to the flood, the way that a person might be saved from the judgment of God was to repent of sin and commit himself to obedience to the Laws of the Living God. God's Law was known and preached. Salvation was granted to the repentant.

## **II. After the Flood, God's Law had a massive impact on the human race.**

It is clear that Ham knew that he was sinning against his father as did Shem and Japheth. Noah's declaration of a curse upon part of Ham's family was a testimony of their rejection of immorality.

And, even though the race descended ultimately into superstition and idolatry, hundreds of years later in the life of Abraham we find both Pharaoh and Abimilech of the Philistines horrified that Abraham would lie to them about Sarah and put them in danger of being judged by God for

having another man's wife. This is unexplainable unless we recognize that there was wide knowledge of the Law of God in the human race for many years after the flood.

But, of course, we also have Sodom and Gomorrah in the lifetime of Abraham showing that the race was plummeting into a new round of rebellion against God. Rather than punish the race again with widespread destruction, God began to construct a spiritual 'ark' a race of people descended from Abraham who would be the keepers of the revelations that God would give and the trustees to whom He would grant the full understanding of His Laws.

### **III. It would be to the nation that God formed from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that God would give clear revelation of His Will and His Law.**

After they had gone into Egypt and become a great nation, God called them out through Moses and gave them the great revelations at Sinai which included not only what God's Laws were but how that one who broke God's Law could be reconciled to Him and receive mercy. The worship system that He gave them would be an elaborate set of pictures to lead them to the understanding of a Great Mediator and Go-Between Who would bear their guilt and sins in reality and secure to them an eternal and everlasting salvation.

But, you know the story. Beginning in the wilderness and continuing through their long history they continually refused God's Law and sought pleasure in wickedness and in the idolatrous religions of the people groups around them. Time and again God would send judgment upon them for their rebellion. But almost always He also sent men to cry out against their wickedness and call them to repentance and to a return to God, offering mercy and pardon, even the restoration of their nation if they would heed the call of God.

The story is redundant almost to frustration as we read how under Moses, then under the Judges, and finally under the kings, the Jewish people were continually wandering from God and being called back. If you truly study the ministries of the various prophets, those were men crying out to their countrymen to repent of their sins and trust God. David and Isaiah especially had wonderful displays of the mercy and grace of God and great prophetic views of the coming Messiah.

But as redundant as the recurring stories of Israel's falling away were the stories of God's amazing and sometimes unbelievable mercies. I want to give you two examples. The first is Ahab, the notorious king of the northern Kingdom of Israel. He had married Jezebel the daughter of the Zidonian king and a notorious idolater. Through her influence Ahab instituted wholesale worship of Baal and Asherah in Israel, persecuted the prophets of God and took what he desired from the people including the vineyard of Naboth. God sent him a scathing rebuke through Elijah the prophet, declaring that his kingdom would be taken from him and his wife eaten by the dogs. Ahab's reaction and God's behavior because of it is almost incredible.

1 Kings 21:27-29

27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

- 29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

Unbelievably, the Lord showed Himself merciful to the repentance of Ahab and postponed the judgment until after he was dead.

Another amazing story is found in the southern kingdom concerning maybe her worst king, a man by the name of Manasseh. His sins were as bad if not worse than those of Ahab.

2 Kings 21:2-9

- 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.
- 3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.
- 4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.
- 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.
- 6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.
- 7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:
- 8 Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.
- 9 But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

As a result, the Babylonians came against them, carried Manasseh away captive and put another man on the throne of Judah. But while in captivity Manasseh repented of his sins and sought the Lord. God's response to him was more incredible than the response to Ahab.

2 Chron 33:12-16

- 12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,
- 13 And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.
- 14 Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities

of Judah.

- 15 And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.
- 16 And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

In addition to showing Himself Holy and Righteous and a certain Judge of the sins of man, God also demonstrated that He is merciful beyond measure and beyond human understanding. Unfortunately even the conversion of Manasseh did not solve the problem in Judah.

But, always, the problem was sin and the remedy was faith manifested in repentance and obedience. Finally, God pulled the plug on the nation, keeping only a remnant of it in existence to secure the birth of His Messiah of the bloodline of David.

#### **IV. Jesus came with the same message as the prophets but with so much more information that no one could claim ignorance.**

First, John the Baptist came, whom we are told, came in the spirit and power of Elijah and with the same message, “repent.” Then, Jesus began to proclaim the same message.

Matt 4:17

- 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The real difference with Jesus was that He proclaimed repentance more clearly and fully than anyone had ever done.

Many people look at the Sermon on the Mount as some sublime articulation of lofty ideals to which men should strive and aspire, some nebulous set of beautiful thoughts to wish for but never obtain.

Most fail to recognize that Jesus was openly declaring, “This is what Repentance looks like.” Every person who ever truly seeks to repent of his sins finds out that every principle here must be dealt with in practical terms and that his life must be brought, by the power of God, into conformity with all of them.

The repentant man comes to an understanding of his own spiritual poverty, how that he has been ruined by sin and is hopeless and helpless before the wrath of God unless God shows him mercy and grants him life.... “blessed are the poor in spirit.”

The repenting sinner grieves over his sins, seeing them all for the horrid rebellions that they are. He is smitten with sadness and cannot be consoled until God speaks the comforting message of forgiveness to him... “blessed are they that mourn, they shall be comforted.”

The one who repents surrenders all pride and arrogance, all self-love and sense of entitlement. He commits his life to the Will of God and surrenders himself willingly to be a doer of God’s

Law... “blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

The repentant hunger and thirst for righteousness, they grant mercy freely to those who have sinned against them, they give themselves to purity and seek peace with all men.

He went on to talk about enduring persecution and bearing witness as the light of the world. Then, he spoke in detail of many issues related to what it means to turn from sin to God. If you ever want to see what repentance is truly to look like, do an in-depth study of this great message of Christ.

But He was also very clear as to what repentance does not look like. If you will recall, He was quite vocal in His denunciation of the wickedness of the Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees.

In Matthew 23, He laid out in plain detail those things that are not to be thought of as associated with true repentance.

He began with the issue of making a show of religion when there is no reality in the heart, seeking the praise of men while ignoring God and refusing to honor Him.

He condemned the practice of men exalting themselves over others and seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God.

He further rebuked them for obstructing the way to the kingdom of God by making false and unnecessary rules for those who were seeking God. He said, “you refuse to enter God’s kingdom and you hinder those who would.” v.13.

He condemned them for dealing unjustly and unmercifully with the less fortunate and then going to the temple to lift up long prayers as if they were righteous men, v.14.

And he added to the condemnation that when they made a ‘convert’ they essentially sealed his soul to hell because of the false doctrine they taught, v.15.

Phony and false rules, religious technicalities to trip up the unwary, pretending to keep all of the Law of Moses while making secret exceptions for themselves, hypocrisy, corruption, pretended respect for the prophets, all these things were condemned by the Lord Jesus.

It is almost that Matt 23 is a negative image of the pictures He painted in Matt 5,6,7.

But here is the thing, Jesus proclaimed the same repentance as Moses and all the prophets. He offered the same mercy from God for the repentant believer as they had. He certainly filled in a lot of blank spots in the information and fully developed the ideas surrounding salvation

**V. But then in an act of Mercy and Grace that no human mind has ever been able to fully grasp, He shouldered the guilt of the sins of all who would ever truly repent and gave His Own Body to death for the ransom of such as Manasseh, Ahab, the crucified thief, you and me.**



Never has such an act of love been done for anyone, let alone a vast multitude of rebellious humans. All of the testimonies of God's mercy in the Old Testament fade into the background when compared with the mighty sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

**VI. And, then, to secure the blessings of what He had done, to guarantee that none for whom He had died would be lost, He rose from the dead, commissioned the church, and sent the Holy Spirit to empower the proclamation of His message across the centuries until every soul for whom He died had heard and believed.**

This is truly an amazing thing, a story like no other that has ever been told, and guaranteed as true by those who witnessed His life, death, resurrection and ascension.

Our God is Great and Merciful, Kind and Compassionate, Longsuffering and full of Goodness. He who rejects His invitation to come and seek His mercy does so against a massive testimony from heaven. It is a foolish thing to do.