

I pray, Lord, that we might rejoice knowing that this is the one to whom we come in prayer. He is the one who ever lives interceding for us. He is the one who provided our redemption, and will take us all the way home. We want to thank and praise You for our blessed Lord—Your gift to us, Father, which demonstrates Your wonderful love. Help us, Lord, to learn well. We pray in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.

We are continuing to study the deity of Christ. Turn to Isaiah 44. We have already looked at His names that prove He is God. He is called “God,” and the “Son of God.” If I were to ask you what that means, you, of course, will know. It refers to position not origin. The fact of the matter is that the Greek word for “born one” is never used of Him in the New Testament. He is the heir. He is called the “Lord”—*kurios* is what translates the Hebrew word, *Yahweh*. He is called the “Lord of Glory.” He is called the “Holy One.” One hundred and eight times the Bible says that He is the “Holy One of Israel.”

Now Isaiah 44 presents a very critical issue as it relates to the deity of Christ. He is called the First and the Last. Look at Isaiah 44:6. I pointed out to you before that the word *Yahweh* is used twice in this verse. The Redeemer is called “*Yahweh* of Hosts.” It says, “Thus saith *Yahweh*, the King of Israel and His redeemer, *Yahweh* of Hosts, [Lord *Sabbaoth*].” The word *Sabbaoth* means hosts or armies. “I am the first and I am the last and beside Me there is no God.” Now I know the statement, “I am the first and the last and beside Me is no God,” is a statement of deity. Over in

Isaiah 48:12 it says, “Harken unto Me O Jacob and Israel, my called, I am He. I am the first. I also am the last.” There it is again. “My hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth.” This one is clearly the creator.

Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. (Isaiah 48:13-16)

He is the sent one, and yet in this text He describes Himself as the First and the Last and the creator. “Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God” (Isaiah 48:17). This is a fantastic text. In fact, the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah are critical to the issue of who the Messiah is and His deity.

Now take what you learned just now in Isaiah and turn to Revelation 1. Watch how the New Testament takes these quotations and applies them directly to Jesus. We read of the vision of the resurrected Christ in Revelation:

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:17-18)

You see, there is no doubt about it. He is our Lord Jesus Christ, and He makes a clear statement: “I am the first and the last.”

In Revelation 2:8 it says, “And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write these things saith the first and the last. Which was dead and is alive.” You cannot deny this one. At the end of Revelation, in the last chapter it says:

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.
(Revelation 22:12-13)

Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. Now if it is the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet, and Christ is called the Word (the revelation from God), then everything there is to be said that He is the first word and the last word. He is the first letter and the last letter. He is the whole alphabet! He is all there is that God has ever said. You see, the statement is really dealing with the finality of God’s revelation. Jesus is God in human flesh. A final revelation that is complete and sufficient. All the fullness of God dwelt in Him in bodily form. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Now at that

point, if you put a period, you do not have a strong Old Testament connection, although they are certainly powerful statements. But the next one is, “The first and the last.” There it is again, directly out of Isaiah 44 and 48.

Now notice Revelation 22:16, which says, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” The point of using this verse is to confirm that the person talking is, in fact, Jesus.

Now we have already mentioned that He is called the “Lord of Hosts” in Isaiah 44:6. The word there is *Yahweh*. The Redeemer is called the “Lord of Hosts.” It is not *Adonai* (an earthly lord). It is *Yahweh*, the very name of our God.

Now we said there were several arguments to prove the deity of Christ. His names are just one of them. We also have the matter of His attributes and abilities. Technically speaking, divine attributes are not possessed by man. The reason why I point this out is that you will get some books in the Christian bookstore that will talk about the attributes of God. Then it will say, “Some of the attributes are love, righteousness, faithfulness, etc.” Though we are not what God is, we do manifest some of the same characteristics. When you speak strictly of the attributes of God it is not love, it is not mercy; it is not righteousness. Man has a limited capability to manifest these qualities, but the attributes of God are what man is not capable of possessing in any degree.

Certain Christian preachers on television have announced to audiences that they are God, saying, “I am God. I am God.” That is blasphemy! It is a miracle that God did not strike them all dead. Thank God for His patience and long-suffering. We are not God. We never will be God. Ever! God is God, and no one else will be God because there is only one God.

It is very important, therefore, to look at these attributes, so that you can ask yourself the question, “Do any of these apply to Jesus Christ?” We have listed seven of them for you:

- **He is eternal** (Isaiah 9:6; 1 John 5:11)
- **He is unchangeable** (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:8-12; 13:8)
- **He is omnipresent** (Matthew 18:20; 28:20; Colossians 2:3)
- **He is omnipotent** (Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 1:8; 22:12-13)
- **He is perfect** (Colossians 1:19; 2:9-10)
- **He is incomprehensible** (Isaiah 9:6; 55:8-9; Matthew 11:27; Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 3:8, 19)

Christ is eternal and man is not. Isaiah 9:6 says, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Now, a lot of people—like the Jesus Only group who believe that Jesus and the Father are one and the same—will use this verse to say, “Isaiah 9:6 calls Him the Father.” No. It calls Him the Father of the Ages. What it means is that He is the source controlling all of time. It is dealing with His providential control, but it is not saying that He is the Father. This text describes Him as being eternal. In 1 John 5:11, which is a wonderful passage to memorize for assurance, it says in verse 11, “This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.” Eternal life is the possession of Jesus Christ. He is eternal. There are more that we could give you, because we are just hitting the highlights.

Now a second attribute of God, which is unlike man, is that He is unchangeable. Malachi 3:6 says, “I am *Yahweh*, I change not.” Now from man’s perspective, it might look like He changes.

For instance, at the time of the Flood it says that the Lord repented that He made man when He saw all the wickedness of man. Yet to truly understand that we need to know that that was written from a human standpoint. He has not changed. One of His principles is to judge sin. So you see that He has not changed. The Lord changed His mind, we think, because man sinned. No, He knew that man would sin, and so the change of mind simply deals with the change of the course of action which God will take. Up until that time, He is patient. At that time, He is no longer patient but brings a judgment—and righteously so. His character simply does not change.

It is interesting in that passage, that if the Bible did not say that about God and if, in fact, He did not judge the world, then we could argue that He does change. Yet His character is always consistent with Himself. I would like you to turn to Hebrews 1 so that you get this into your mind and heart. He is unchangeable. In some theological books that you might read from time to time, this is usually called “immutability,” meaning unchangeable.

But unto the Son He saith, thy throne O God is forever and ever.
A scepter of righteousness is a scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast
loved righteousness and hated iniquity therefore, God, even thy
God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy
fellows. And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the
foundation of the earth. And the heavens are the works of thine
hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest unchangeable. They
all shall wax old as doth a garment. As a vesture shalt thou fold
them up and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and
thy years shall not fail. (Hebrews 1:8-12)

What is interesting is if you go over to Hebrews 13. The book of Hebrews is one of the best books to read on the person and work of Jesus Christ—especially from a Jewish point of view. You cannot miss the connection, because here at the last chapter, he deals with the immutability of the Lord which he mentioned in the first chapter. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday and today and forever.” He is the unchangeable Christ!

Now some of the next three attributes are what people fight over in the Christian world. This relates to the time that our Lord became a man. There are a lot of good men who are discussing these things, but the root question here is, “When Jesus became a man, what aspects of His divine attributes did He not possess?” I want to answer this very firmly and clearly for you so that you know what I believe. It does not make me right, but I do believe it is the historic view of Christianity. That is, He never stopped being God. Never! All during His earthly ministry when He willingly humbled Himself and became a man and dwelt among us, He was still God in human flesh. All the fullness of God dwelt in Him.

Watch very carefully the tricky wording of some Bible teachers today that indicate that the fullness of God dwelling in Him did not occur until the resurrection. Some in the Word of Faith Movement actually believe that Jesus became a sinner, descended into hell, was tortured, punished, then became born again, and then became the fullness of God in human flesh. They would say that we also can do the same through the new birth. That is pure heresy! It is an abomination in the sight of God, and I do not care how extensive their television ministries are. I am talking about Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin and Fred Price. Many of the things that they say will look and sound good, but their view of Christ’s deity is pure heresy!

Now Christ never stopped being God—ever—throughout the time He was here on earth. When I pointed out Philippians 2:5-11 to you (the key passage on what we call the *kenosis*), we saw the emptying of Christ. What we believe He did is that He laid aside the exercise of His divine attributes. It does not mean that He permanently did this, because on certain occasions He clearly revealed it. It would have only taken one look in the Garden of Gethsemane and the entire priestly soldiers would have fallen over backwards like dominoes. He could have done whatever He wanted to. He said to the fig tree, “be withered!” “Whoosh,” that is the end of that one! He could do whatever He wanted to. There was a storm in the Sea of Galilee, which the Bible says He rebuked. It uses the same word for rebuking a demon. Immediately the sea was calmed. It did not just gradually go down, but went “Whoosh!” The disciples, who were expert fishermen, knew that wind did not just casually subside like that. When they saw it, they fell at His feet and said, “Truly You are the Son of God.” Then they worshipped Him as the Bible declares.

So, Christ did not stop being God, yet everybody questions this. For instance, let us look at Christ’s possession of the attribute of being omnipresent. How is Jesus omnipresent when He had a physical body located in the land of Israel (never really traveling more than 200 miles from His home)? Now class, I do not want to make you a weirdo in your brain today, but I do want you to understand that at the same time that Jesus was walking the hills of Judea and Galilee, He was also filling the universe with His presence. This is where we have a total inability to understand from the human perspective.

Matthew 18:15-20 deals with the issue of what to do when a brother has trespassed against you. This is not when you think he has trespassed against you, but when there is a known trespass. Do not come up to some brother and say, “I just have bad vibes about you and we just need to get it straightened.” I would like to suggest that you keep your vibes to yourself and lay them at the feet

of the Lord. Do not trouble other Christians about it. Now if somebody has literally smacked you in the face, this is called an offense. You are now supposed to go to your brother and say, “Hey man, you shouldn’t have hit me in the face.” We assume that he had no reason or cause to hit you, but that he just did it. If he does not listen to you, bring two or three others. If he does not listen to them, then tell it to the church—presumably as Acts did through its leadership. “But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Verse 20 says, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” That is all you need for a church: two or three people. If you are Jewish, it almost makes us laugh because we have to have at least ten guys. What do they mean, two or three? Well, He is talking in the passage about the two or three witnesses. According to the law in Deuteronomy, in order for a word that you say to be established, you need two or three witnesses to confirm it. What He is saying is that when two or three are gathered together in Jesus’ name to witness what that brother says, He is there in the midst of it. In other words, the authority of Christ is there.

Now in Matthew 28:2, after His resurrection, Christ makes a statement pertaining to this after giving us what is called the “Great Commission” to go and teach all nations and baptize them. He says, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” Do you believe the Lord Jesus is with you right now? Do you believe He is in this room?

Colossians 3:11 says, “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.” In other words, “Christ is everything that you would possibly need in Christianity and is in every person.” This verse clearly teaches the omnipresence of Christ.

We speak about Jesus coming into your heart, but according to John 14, not only does Jesus come, but the Holy Spirit and the Father come as well. Jesus said, “We will all abide in you.” “We will make our abode in you.” That is kind of interesting and confusing to children. Why do you not ask the Father to come into your heart? It would almost confuse them. See, when you honor the Son, you honor the Father. Do not make any mistake about it, there is only one God. You cannot separate them in the sense of their presence because they are omnipresent.

It is interesting that Christ is on the outside of the door of the church of Laodicea in the book of Revelation. He is not in the church. He is on the outside knocking and saying, “If any man...” (He uses the singular). Apparently the church gets so bad in the end times that Jesus has been pushed outside and His invitation is to anyone in there. Is that not interesting? “If anyone will open the door I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me.” So at the end times the point of the individual’s relationship to the Lord is very critical because the church is apparently so rotten that He wants to spew it out of His mouth and He is actually knocking on the outside of the door.

Sometimes we use this with little kids and say, “You must open the door of your heart to Jesus.” That is true. I would say sometimes to little kids, “The doorknob is on the inside and Jesus isn’t going to force His way into your life. He is not going to knock down the door. You have to open the door and let Him come in.” Is that a valid application? Of course it is. An individual receiving Jesus is on the outside of the church in the end time and it is very valid to say that. Then I ask them, “So where is Jesus now?” This is where they get confused. In most of the children’s books, you are supposed to ask the child, “Where is Jesus now?” Well, you want them to say, “He’s in my heart.” You can say, “But He’s also in heaven”—yet that would confuse a child, but it is the truth.

We know from the time of His ascension, that He is at the right hand of the throne of God and He is not coming back during this age. He is in heaven. What is He doing up there? He is continually interceding for us in front of the Father. Why do we need to have intercession? Why do we need to have somebody defending us? There is a prosecuting attorney in the throne room of heaven and that is the devil. You say, “I thought he got kicked out back there between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.” No, somebody made that up. At the book of Job he was still up there accusing brothers and sisters, and according to Revelation 12, he will not be officially kicked out of heaven until the tribulation period. There will be a titanic battle between Michael the archangel accompanied by the good angels of God versus Satan and his angels. The good angels will win, and Satan will be cast to the earth, where he will try to unleash his fury in the last three and a half years of tribulation. What has he been doing up there all this time? When you wear a t-shirt that says, “The devil made me do it,” you are giving yourself too much credit. He is not paying you a personal visit because he does not need to. He can send one of his greasy little demons to trouble you. He does not need to pay you a personal visit, besides he is not omnipresent. The devil is not ubiquitous, but is an angel. He has the ability to travel with great speed, faster than any of us, but his primary mission is to accuse the brethren day and night before God. Thank the Lord that Revelation 12 tells us that we have overcome him by the blood of the lamb. Our Lord is ever living as our high priest to intercede. He is our defense attorney, which is the meaning of the word “advocate.” He is called our advocate in 1 John:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.

And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and

not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

(1 John 2:1-2)

It is a wonderful truth that He is omnipresent. He is right now at the right hand of the throne of God, in the physical body in which He was resurrected. Yet He is also in my heart as well as the Father and Spirit. God now dwells in me, but not all of Him.

You say, “Well when do you have the fullness of God, meaning all that He is?” Only when you have all the believers together. Paul wrote in Ephesians that the church is the fullness of Him who fills all and in all. Now all the fullness of God dwelt in His one body alone, and so all that God is was in Jesus. Yet all that God is, is not in you, but in the total body of Christ. Here all the aspects of God’s character is reflected. Is everybody following me? So you might know something about God that you reflect in your life. Perhaps His mercy has been good to you, and another person might know something about His faithfulness. As we share in the body of Christ, we all learn, we all grow and we edify one another in love.

He is also omniscient. I cannot tell you how many guys—good Bible teachers—say, “Well, when He was on earth, He didn’t know everything.” Why do they say this? They get this from one passage and one passage alone. “No man knows the day nor the hour, neither the angels of heaven or the Son of Man.” This refers to the day of His coming. They say, “See, He doesn’t know the day.”

Now let me ask you a question. Is there anything that God says that He knows, which He chooses not to know? Can anybody think of one? Our sins! Praise the Lord. Does He know what we have done? Of course, but He chooses not to remember our sins any more. Praise the Lord. Can the Lord then choose not to remember the day, while He was on earth talking to us, to identify with His disciples? Could He choose to do that? Of course He could.

Is there any evidence that He was omniscient while He was on earth? Look at John 2, and remember that in Colossians 2:3 it says, “In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” It sure sounds like He knows everything to me. Let me ask you a question. Did Jesus grow in wisdom and knowledge? Yes, He did, as the Bible states. He grew in wisdom and knowledge and in favor with God and man. Then He did not know everything, did He? You see, we are right back at the mystery problem of the deity and humanity of Christ.

Is there any evidence that Jesus was omniscient while He was on earth? Yes. John 2:23-25:

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast [day], many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all [men], And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

It would be a little uncomfortable if you were hanging somebody who knew everything you were thinking? In Mark 2:6, Jesus heals this paralytic man, “And certain of the scribes were reasoning in their hearts, ‘Why does this man, thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God only?’” Verse 8 says, “Immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, ‘Why reason ye these things in your hearts?’” That must have come as a little shock to them. He knew what they were thinking.

Not only is He omniscient, but He is also omnipotent. That means that there is nothing that He cannot do. Now people ask, “Wait a minute. Can He make a rock that He can’t move?” The

answer is no. He does not do dumb things. Let me add a little statement to give you what I really believe is the biblical doctrine on the omniscience, omnipotence and omniscience—particularly the omnipotence primarily. “God can do anything consistent with His nature.” See, God is not going to violate who He is in order to please our fanciful ideas. He is omnipotent.

Philippians 3 speaks about His power to give us a resurrected body like His. He writes:

Our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. (Philippians 3:20)

Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that He cannot do that. To them, only the Father is capable of that. Eventually Christ surrenders all things to the Father who is the only one who can do that. Yet here is a clear verse that says Christ will do that and can do that. Our Lord is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

In Revelation 1:8 it says, “I am Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end, sayeth the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty—the Omnipotent One.” This one is difficult to miss. There is not anything that Christ cannot do. In fact in Revelation 22, He says the same thing, “I am Alpha and Omega.” Clearly this is Jesus according to verse 16 as we have already seen before.

One of the things that designate God as being God and not man is that He is perfect. He is totally complete and sufficient in and of Himself, therefore needing nothing. Colossians 1:19 states, “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Now in the Greek text the word “Father” is not there. That is why it is italicized in most Bibles. The subject of the sentence is “all the fullness.” Let us now read it as it is in the Greek. “All the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him.” Whatever God is, there is nothing missing.

Look at Colossians 2:9-10 which says, “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are filled up in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.” This is very interesting that when you have Jesus you have all you would ever need. You do not need anything else—ever. Our sufficiency is of the Lord. Christ is all and in all. You do not need anything else. What about holy laughter? No, you do not need it. Stained glass windows? No, you do not need it at all. What about Pastors? Did you know that the church grows all over the world without pastors? God will raise them up just like He wants, out of anybody, anywhere. Do we need Bibles? No. We went many years without Bibles. The church still grew. In fact, we did not even have a printing press until AD 1450. There must be something else that we need. Do we need Robes? No. Christ is all you need. That is why we can do church anywhere. Let us do church. Amen.

Now there is one other term that you will not often find that I believe fully fits the whole argument is that He is incomprehensible. He is past finding out. He is greater than our knowledge can ever discern. In Isaiah 9:6 it says, “His name shall be called Wonderful.” The Hebrew word means that his name is incomprehensible (i.e., too difficult to understand). I think it is important for us to understand this nature of God, because we are going to be learning about Him throughout all eternity and we will never find out all that there is to know about Him. Some

people see heaven as finally knowing everything you need to know about God. No. You are just starting.

My thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

He gives us a comparison here. Would you say that the galaxies out there are quite a distance from earth? You know we talk about sending a spaceship out and traveling at unbelievable speeds, but we cannot even travel at 186,000 miles per second (*e.g.*, the speed of light). It takes four years to get to the nearest star in our galaxy—not counting many galaxies. Would you say the heavens are higher than the earth? Of course, it is almost mind-boggling to even fathom how man could ever approach it. Then understand that God is using that to say, “Oh by the way, My thoughts and My ways are in the same manner far distant from where you are.”

In church history there are two doctrines about God that sort of fight each other from time to time and you need a balance. There is what we call the transcendence of God, meaning how great He is. The other is the eminence of God, meaning how He has identified himself with His creation. He is transcendent—far greater than anyone can possibly fathom. Yet He is also eminent—small enough to live within my heart. Those two things battle.

Sometimes you and I, in wanting to pray to God, want to know that He is as close as our breath and He is our friend. He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and is also our compassionate and merciful high priest, who comforts us when we are going through difficult times. We pray as

though He is right there in the room. We talk to Him as though He is just like another person, which He is. Now we have to be careful here of the eminence of God. If we keep focusing on it, how He is like us, it brings rise to a danger of misunderstanding who He really is. He is also the transcendent God—Greater than anything you could ever imagine!

People tell me that I really have to believe something in order for it to happen. The Word of Faith Movement is a great example of this, “You should claim it; just say it; just believe it. It’s up to you, brother. You can have it or not!” It is both nonsense and an offense to the transcendence of God. It is not my great faith in God that does anything, but it is merely faith in a great God. The greatness of God is what I need to understand in order to truly have confidence and dependence upon Him and not myself. That is very important. He is the incomprehensible God. Romans 11 says that His ways are past finding out. His judgments are unsearchable. It is really incredible when you think about Him as the incomprehensible Christ! Amen.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

We are now going to consider the abilities that prove that He was God. Of course, we are going to start with Creation. He created all things. John 1:3 says, “All things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made.” “He was in the world,” verse 10 says, and the world was made by Him.

Colossians 1:16 says, “He created all things whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, things in heaven, things in earth, things under the earth. Everything was created by Him and for Him.” As the Creator, He is God.

Now the Holy Spirit also was involved in Creation. We are not discussing the Holy Spirit here, but I wanted to point out that He had a role in Creation as well. “The Spirit of God moved [or hovered like a dove] over the waters.” More importantly, Job 26:16 says, “By His Spirit He hath garnished [beautified] the heavens.” You might say that the Holy Spirit was the architect. He created all things.

Number two is a very interesting doctrine. Do you believe that everything that happens in your life is being controlled by Jesus Christ? I sometimes laugh at how often we fight over whether or not He is controlling the issue of us becoming Christians. How easily we can say, “Oh yeah, He controls all things.” Does that mean He controls time? Did God know the day you were conceived and born? Does He know the day you are going to die? Is He controlling it?

Romans 11:36 says, “All things are from Him and through Him and shall be unto Him.”

Colossians 1:17 says that He is controlling even the physical laws of the universe. Why do the worlds not collide? Yet when a meteor does hit, it is because God wanted it to. Wow. What a doctrine! That would be popular in the average university campus, would it not? Colossians 1:17 say, “He is before all things and by Him all things consist.” They are being held together by Christ.

Hebrews 1:2-3 says that He is upholding all things by the word of His power. All the laws of the universe are controlled and sustained by Jesus Christ. Now the old theologians called this “providence.” The word “providence” means the control of our circumstances and events in life.

Now let us suppose that today you took a little trip down the mountain and you had a car wreck. Now here is a problem. Did God send angels down (or remove them), knowing that the way you drive you would easily have a wreck? Or did God send specific agents into your life to give you an accident at a given moment of life because He knew that would accomplish something relating to His plan? Did He do that? Someone in the audience mentioned that He allowed it, and here comes another gigantic problem in Christianity about the will of God.

If God just allows things but does not do anything to intervene, is it because He is too busy and has others over in China that He is working on? This is a very difficult problem. Now you see I can always discuss this warmly, freely, and controversially in class, but until something negative happens in my life it is another story. It is okay to talk about this if it happened to you. But if it happens to me, I begin to say, “Well, hopefully the Lord *only* allowed it.” I cannot imagine Him letting something like that occur.

I will give you an illustration. A young couple had a baby which lasted for two months and then died. I performed the funeral and everybody was asking me the same question, “Why?”

Sometimes it is not advisable, or appropriate, to just come out with it. You do not respond in that situation saying, “Well, there are thirty-six reasons why that occurred.” That is not exactly very comforting. Sometimes we say what we want to say to minister at that moment, but in our minds there is a question. We know that the truth will set us free. Now I can say, “Well He is sparing your baby from a terrible life,” because if we only have hope in this life, we are of all men most

miserable. According to what God said to David whose baby died (the baby will not come back to him, but he will apparently go to the baby) the baby is in heaven—with the Lord. I guess that that sort of helps.

If you have ever lost a child, then think about this. There are events that happen in life, to which the response is “Why?” Here is somebody that looks like they have such tremendous opportunities for the Lord. Their whole life has been designed and shaped by God to be greatly used and then bang! They were killed. Why did this happen?

First of all, we have all got a problem here because it is almost like our purpose is to find meaning in life and to avoid heaven as long as possible. Do you see what I mean? Is it really true that you have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better? Now I was not sure of that the day I got married. A good friend of mine who is the head of a large missionary organization in Europe was my best man. We are at the wedding, standing in front of the minister who is going over this, then he leans over to me and says, “Just think, the Rapture could occur right now.” My long good friend—God bless him, that whacko. You see, there are a lot of things in life for which you cannot come up with quick and easy answers.

Paul said, “To remain in the flesh is more needful for you.” Sometimes that may be true. I think about that more and more. I do not have any grandparents and I never met them. My parents are all gone. My wife’s parents are all gone too. You know a few years ago I woke up to the fact that I am it. I am the patriarch of this clan and I did not even want the job. You know what I mean? I do not want the responsibility. I want to play some more and not have to do this. But it happens. Grandkids come along the way, and I love grandkids. My standard answer is this, “If I knew they were this good I would have had them before I had kids.” I love grandkids. You have to think

about that. There is something that hits you the first time you see your grandchild. The first one you get. It is the question, “Am I old?” Then they get older and they are like people. They are real people—not babies anymore. You think, “Well how old am I?” It just gets really weird. Then you begin to ask the question, “Why?” Sometimes I think that my family needs me to stay around. But the truth is, they really do not need me to stay around. You see, that is how you begin to feel. Then you think, “I want to go home and be with the Lord.” Well, maybe not yet. I just want to finish my class. It would be embarrassing to have to leave here in the middle of it. Then I think, “Wait a minute, we are going to glory. They will instantly know all the material and won’t need the exam,” which probably sounds like a relief to some of you.

Now, getting back to my point, “Does God really control all things?” Are we saying that the Lord Jesus Christ is controlling all things? How does He do that? There are millions of people all around the world. How does He do that? I often look at traffic and wonder, “Man, how does He maneuver that all?” Can you see why a lot of people—well meaning Christians—have God not active in the affairs of human life? Yet He is over all things and in control. He is achieving whatever He has predicted will take place according to the Bible. In the particulars, we get to the place where we feel, “Well maybe He just leaves a lot of it up to us.”

Then we develop strange kinds of doctrines. Have you ever heard this? “The Lord helps those who help themselves.” You see, we do not know how to deal with it. We do not know how to cope with it. I would suggest that you find out what is included in the “all things” that are being worked after the counsel of His will. I made a list. I am not going to print it out and give it to you because I would rather have you look it up. It is a long list, which goes on for two pages concerning all the things that I found out that God was controlling. I discovered that it involved everything. I do not understand how He does it, but the important thing is that he does.

I can honestly say that whatever happens in my life is directly being caused and worked by my blessed Lord, for His glory and my good. This happens, even though I do not see it and I have come to believe that. Have there been a lot of hurtful and disappointing things in your life? There sure has in mine. Are there things in your life that you do not understand and have never been straightened out? There sure are in mine. God knows why He is doing it. Is the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord controlling everything in your life?

You see, otherwise you get into a dilemma where you cannot even obey God, because the Bible says in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. If you do not watch out, you are going to be unable to thank God because it happened to be category bad, or you thought that maybe God only allowed it and was not involved in it, because it was bad (at least in your eyes).

When a fire comes, like the ones we have been having here in Southern California, do you think that anybody wants to read the Bible, which says that fire, earthquake, stormy winds, and hurricanes are fulfilling His word. Wow. Remember the Laguna fire? I love that story because I was in the Book of Revelation at the time. The night when the fire was the biggest, I had my Bible study at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa. You know there are windows there and everybody in the audience sat and watched flames way up in the air because it was that close. It looked like Armageddon and made a terrific background to my message. We had people wanting to get right with the Lord right and left. That was such a neat time. During the course of that time, many of you read the following story which was in the newspaper. It dealt with a community called Turtle Rock in the Irvine area (a very wealthy and affluent area). As the flames were rushing towards Turtle Rock, they actually thought that the area was going to go. That night we had a prayer and

we actually asked God, on the basis of people who lived in Turtle Rock, that He would supernaturally turn that fire around and stop it. Now, I am not saying it was because we possessed such great faith, but God did stop that that night exactly when we prayed about it. Now, how do I deal with that? I just want to “Praise the Lord and you can touch me afterwards,” but that is wrong. Do you see how easy it is for us to get confused? Now did God do something special and coincide it all with people’s praying? Yes, I believe that, but there were probably a lot of people in that community too that were praying that He might have answered.

Now in the course of that, do you remember seeing the one community that was destroyed and the one house in the middle was left standing? I talked to those people and they are Christians. They made a mistake in their joy of thanking the Lord because, in the same block, there were Christians who lost their homes. They talked about how God spared them as though they were somehow special. God rains on the just as well as the unjust, and it is called common grace. This also deals with common tragedies like hurricanes and fires. Many “innocent people” (which is a doubtful statement right there) were hurt or killed in the tragedy. We have to be careful. Did God help that family? Yes, for some reason, but there were others He let their homes burn—maybe for another reason. The American mind is that God did that in order to bless them with a bigger house. Possibly He wanted you to come down to a little apartment that you could afford. That would not be the blessing of God. Would it? Because is not everything supposed to be bigger and better when God is in it? No. That is false doctrine.

Do you understand that the reason that we are struggling about praising God, thanking Him, and really worshipping Him, is because we do not see all things from His hand. That is why people, when they have the good things praise God. “You cannot believe God blessed me with a job. Man, I tell you it was fantastic. It was a raise over what I had before.” The next minute have you

ever heard a guy say, “Oh I thank God I lost my job. He deliberately kicked me out. I’m on the streets now and I can’t eat and oh what a blessing from the hand of the Lord.” Do you understand what I am saying?

Be careful when you say that He is upholding all things by the word of His power. By Him all things consist and hold together. We know that He works all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. It is really a tough issue though.

In dealing with the abilities of Christ, it is amazing even among my Jewish friends because they make the following statement, “He is not the only one that could cure people and heal people.” I just want you to know that anybody that was healed in one fashion or another was ultimately healed by God if a true healing took place. Let me tell you how extensive my view is concerning this. I believe that all healing, whenever it occurs, comes from God. If there is anything in any medicine that heals you of any sickness, the chemical properties of that came from the soil which God Himself created. Is everybody understanding? When your body, through its natural processes, recovers (no matter the means of its recovery), God ultimately is the One who created that process to occur. If a doctor in his wise skill was able to operate on you and get out cancerous material and it turned out to be benign and all of that, I just want you to know that whatever “healing” occurred, God is the author of it, because He even gave him the skill and the ability to see it and to do it (including the equipment, technology, medicine, etc.). Therefore God is ultimately the author of all healing.

In the light of this, we know that some people (whether Christian or not) have been involved in healing. We know, for instance, that the devil is capable of signs, wonders and miracles as well. Now we do not want to say that everything is of the devil because we do not really know. I do not

believe that God teaches that one of divine methods of healing is for me to blow on you. The reason that I do not believe that is God never said to blow on someone to be healed. Now there are people who do believe that, as you know. I do not believe that it is the will of God for me to take my jacket and throw it over your sore and shout, “Be healed!” I do not believe any of that. I do not even think that I have to have a meeting on television in order to do it. Also, I do not believe that I have to have the faith in order for it to occur. Also, I do not believe that you as a sick person have to have that faith in order for it to occur either. I have got reasons for all of this. If you want to know what I believe, I have a little booklet on everything the Bible says about healing. It is really an eye-opener. By the way, Paul, who apparently had the ability to heal people, could not heal some of his closest friends. He left Trophimus sick at Miletus and Apaphroditus almost died on him—so much for his healing power.

Now the reason that I am telling you all this is to see that the ability of Jesus Christ is totally different from any human agency that has ever been involved in healing. Look at Matthew 4:23-24 for one example. Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. There never was anything that He was not able to heal.

He also proves He is God by having power over the sea, as I mentioned that earlier. He calmed the sea instantaneously by just a spoken word. In John 11, the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, He said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Believest thou this?” Now that is putting the pressure on. Then he went to the tomb where everybody was weeping. He says, “Roll away the stone.” The response, “He stinks.” Now I just skipped some things but that is basically what they said. Here is the one who can heal anybody, any time, because he has all power. He is standing there, “Roll away the

stone.” Their answer was, “But he smells.” Do you understand that is a classic illustration to what human response normally is to the power of Christ. Poor Lazarus! Of course he is dead, but he might be thinking, “Hey, down here man.” “We’d love to hear you, buddy, but you stink.” Now when Christ said, “Lazarus, come forth,” do you realize how important it was to call his name? Otherwise everybody would come forth. This is the eternal God talking here.

Now the funniest thing to me about that story is that I have been to Lazarus’s tomb. If you have been there in Bethany, you know that it is a tomb that you have to walk down and old ancient staircase all the way down. It is a little crawl space down in there, and you can hardly maneuver even if your body is not wrapped up. So, here this wrapped up zombie-looking guy is coming out of that hole and walking. He had to walk all the way up those stairs and come out of the door. Then he is standing there going, “Humpf, unmpf.” Jesus says, “Loose him and let him go!”

By the way, I have this little streak in me that has kind of a carnal touch to it from time to time. I had a guy on one of my Holy Land tours who kind of was the picture of Jesus. He had olive skin with long beautiful black hair. He was a tall, good-looking guy. I arranged ahead of time for him to go in a car and we wrapped him in grave clothes all over his body and had him get down into Lazarus’ tomb. We brought the tour group up there, and we are all standing at the entrance. I am preaching on it and I said, “How many of you believe that he could come forth on the sheer spoken word of Jesus?” I still remember this. “Lazarus come forth!” And he comes walking out of the tomb. Two elderly ladies standing in front of the tomb both fainted right on the spot. My tour guide suggested I might not use this practice again lest we have somebody die of a heart attack. I also did it at the tomb of Christ at the resurrection. That was great too.

Well, He does conquer death. One final thing. Is there anything more wonderful than His claims to forgive sin, answer prayer and give eternal life? How could He not be God? In Mark 2 the scribes were correct when they said, “Who can forgive sins but God only?” They were right even though they questioned whether Jesus could. Jesus knowing what they thought in their hearts, confronted them on it and turned to the man and says, “Your sins are forgiven.”

Jesus said, “I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.” “If you ask anything in My name I will do it.” This is God, and that was all said while He was still a man on earth in the days of His flesh. It is incredible is it not? Praise the Lord. Let us pray.

Lord, in all of that pursuit we are limited by our finite minds—our inability to reason as You do. We cannot see as You see. We not only ask Lord, that You would impart to us a heart to believe You, but that we would be content and rest when we do not understand, because we know you are God. We thank You that You are doing all things well, and that there is nothing too hard for You. You will always do right, even though to us it may not seem that way. You have asked us not to lean on our own understanding, but in all our ways to acknowledge You and You would direct our paths. Teach us to do that, Lord. We thank You, in Jesus’ name. Amen.