

# Proverbs 8:22-31

Sunday 8/17/2014

If you have your Bibles this morning, let's turn over to Proverbs 8. For those of you that may be visiting today or are with us for the first time, we are going through a verse-by-verse study of the book of Proverbs, and we have made it all the way up to Proverbs 8. We are coming through it every week, looking at it, taking it apart, and gleaning all the principles out of it we can. We know that the book of Proverbs is probably the key Bible book in all of the Bible. It contains the wisdom of God. I have said for many, many years, and I still believe it, that everything else in the Bible probably threads its way back to the principles in Proverbs.

Today, we are going to get into Proverbs 8:22-31. Without a doubt, Proverbs 8:22-31 is the deepest place in all of the Bible. I do not know of another passage of scripture, another book of the Bible, that has the depth or carries the context of the depth that this passage does. In our message today, I want this to be basically an introduction to this great passage. There are some things here over the next couple of weeks that I really want you to see and learn.

At some point in your life, when you go to church—and I know people go to churches for all kinds of reasons—you have to come to terms with the question in your own life: Do you really want to learn the Bible? That comes down to it. A lot of Christians just want the surface stuff of the Bible; they just want the milk, the cream. They do not want to really study the Bible. That is fine if that is what you want to do. But if you are ever going to be productive in what God wants you to do, then you are going to have to learn the Bible.

This church is about learning the Bible. We blend it around where there are things that are very basic and help you with basic instructions. We try, as Paul said, to teach the whole counsel of God in every aspect. But if you are going to learn the Bible, sooner or later you are going to have to get into passages that have some depth to them. If you stay away from them, then you really are not going to learn the Bible at all because they are always key to putting all of the Bible together. So, I want you to understand that today as we begin to put this together.

You remember that when I brought you through on Thursday night, a while back, we did what we called the seven pillars out of Proverbs 9, seven foundational truths that the Bible is built on. Then again, later after we did that, I came through the dispensations, and we laid Proverbs 8 out in a very definitive way under the doctrine of Christ. Today, over the next couple of weeks, we are going to begin to break it down again for you. But today, I want this to be an introduction to some things that I want you to understand why this chapter is so important. We will look at this key doctrine in the Bible.

Let's read Proverbs 8:22-31. Here is what it says:

*Proverbs 8:22-31*

*The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.*

*I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.*

*When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.*

*Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:*

*While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.*

*When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:*

*When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:*

*When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:*

*Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;*

*Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.*

Now Father, help us today to begin to break down this great passage by understanding some things that go along with this that will help us put it into a better context. These are good people here today, Lord. They have come to hear the word of God, and Lord, we pray that we will teach and preach the Bible to them. Lord, we always want to make sure that on all levels we cover and teach people the Bible, whether they are young Christians, medium Christians, or they are the old-time Christians that really have a handle on the Bible. We want to bridge to everybody what they need. But Lord, help us to realize and understand that if we are ever going to be effective for God, if we are ever going to do all that God wants us to do, then we are going to have to learn the Bible. It cannot be the milk toast baby formula all of our lives. We have to grow up, and we have to take the word of God. We have to get into the meat of the Bible and grow thereby. So help us today as we lay this out. Help me be clear in my presentation and help me to give them what You would have me to give them today. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, and so we ask it. Amen.

## I. The Historical Battle for Christ's Deity

At some point in your life, you are going to come through church history. We have taught it here many, many times, and we know from Revelation 3:1-3 that church history spans approximately 2,000 years. We know that the Bible breaks it down into seven periods. Yet, most people do not know and understand that in each of those periods of time, there was an issue that came up that the church had to deal with. There was an issue that came up of bad teaching or heresy, doctrinal impurity that the church had to face, deal with, and take a stand on.

We are in the last one today, Laodicea. There is no question today to anybody who has any insight into what is going on: our issue today that we face as Christians is simply this. I never would have thought that we would have to face this, but this is what we face. We face today: Do we have the pure, true words of God in your lap this morning? That is the issue of the Laodicean church. The majority of people in this church period will tell you that you do not, and they will

want you to rely on them or their seminaries or their scholarship that they will tell you what God says.

We believe the Bible teaches and has always taught that God gave His revelation to you and me, the common man. I believe the Bible teaches, and this church stands on the fact, that if you never got past the sixth grade, you can know God as great as anybody, any college professor out there, because it is not about your attitude that develops your relationship with God, but rather your attitude toward the things of God.

So that is our issue. In the Philadelphia church, which we know took place from around 1600 to 1900, that 300-year period, the issue that came up with them was eternal security. Are you once truly saved? Can you lose your salvation? In the Sardis church period, which was coming up the last 500 years of the Dark Ages, the issue that came up was predestination. Did God choose some people to go to heaven and some people to go to hell? The church had to deal with that.

In the Thyatira church period, which runs the first half of the Dark Ages, about 500 up to about 1000, they had to deal with the aspect of the coming of Christ. Was it the amillennial approach or was it the post-millennial approach? They had to struggle through that because that teaching began to come about around that time period, and it lasted all through these church periods. In Pergamos, which runs about 300 up to about 500 at the start of the Dark Ages, their issue was baptism for salvation. They had to struggle through and deal with that and take a stand on what the Bible taught versus what was coming out and what people were saying.

In the first two church periods, which would be Smyrna, about 33 AD to 100 AD, and then the first one, Ephesus, they had two major doctrines that they had to deal with. They had to deal first of all in Smyrna with the resurrection of Christ. Did Christ really come out of that tomb? Because there was a lot of stuff circulating that He did not, or He really did not die. Of course, we know that the very salvation we hold dear today, and the very Bible, and the very crux of everything that Christianity is, comes back to that fact. If He did not resurrect and come out of that tomb, we are wasting our time this morning.

But then the early church, the first issue that came up, is the issue that we find in Proverbs 8 that makes up for such a deep passage, and that is the deity of Christ. Was Jesus Christ very God? That was the issue. The doctrine of Christ, the deity of Christ, was the first issue that came up when Christ came at the first coming of Christ. Today, as all of these move down through history, there are still many, many people who do not accept that: the issue of who Christ was as to His deity.

## II. Satan's Attack on Christ's Deity

In the Bible, we have talked about this before, Paul has given, or the Holy Spirit of God has given, seven mysteries to the church. Those seven mysteries are very key. We are told in 1 Corinthians 4:1 that as pastors and teachers and leaders, we are to be stewards of that. We are to teach people that. We do here. It is on the website. We have talked about it many, many times. I have taught it. I do not know how many times I am talking about it again today.

There is a lot of confusion today in Christianity. There are people who are messed up on major issues. There are people who are messed up on eternal security; they are not sure that they can know for sure that they are saved. There are people out there running around, marking everybody that is a leader in the world today, and trying to make him the antichrist, and truly believe that the antichrist has come. We know that that is not true. There are people today that teach that there is no rapture of the church. There are people today who are taking a stand against the nation of Israel. Do you know where all those things come from? All of those things come from pastors not being stewards of the mysteries of God, because those seven mysteries will lay out and completely cover all of those major issues that the church is confused about.

In the Bible, one of those seven mysteries is the mystery called the mystery of godliness. It deals with who Christ was and His deity. It says in 1 Timothy 3:16:

*1 Timothy 3:16*

*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

This is a key verse in grasping the concept of who Christ was as to His deity. In a moment, I want to look at two key phrases here, or two key words. But first, allow me to show you what the problem is here in a little more depth.

With the religious world today, there has always been a desire to make Christ a lesser God. In other words, not allowing Him to be equal with God as part of the equal Trinity. This heresy actually started around the time of Christ's first coming. The devil has always, down through history, and certainly started this in the early church, denied the deity of Christ, that He was a lesser God. He was a demigod, as they say. They basically say that God, someplace in the distant past, created another God who was a lesser God than God Himself, and that would be Jesus Christ, and that is what they teach.

If you talk to a Mormon, a Mormon believes that. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that. The Church of Christ believes that. Many major religions will put that in their creed, and they will talk about Jesus Christ, and here is the thing that we want to talk about in a minute, Jesus Christ being a begotten God. For me, all history is pretty simplified. We know it is a plan by the devil to dethrone Christ as God's Son and to exalt himself. That was his original fundamental problem.

Turn over to Isaiah 14. If you do not have a Bible, just listen to it. No big deal. I will read it for you. But here is where we see what the fundamental problem is. This is the Holy Spirit of God telling us what the devil said way back in Genesis 1.

*Isaiah 14:13-14*

*For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:*

*I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.*

This is the number one problem that we have in the Bible with the devil. He wants to be God. Therefore, consequently, all down through history, what he has tried to do through religion and through people is to take away the fact that Christ was very God because he wants to exalt himself as God. Obviously, this is why the devil hates the King James 1611 Authorized Version. He hates it because it is the only Bible on the planet that protects and honors and glorifies the deity of Christ. He hates that. That is what you are dealing with here. All the new Bibles will change it or take it out in some way or the other and deny the deity of Christ.

Look at Isaiah 14:12. Let me give you an example of this, give you a couple of good examples here. This is God talking to the devil. Look what He says:

*Isaiah 14:12*

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

That is a reference to the devil being called the son of the morning. If you have an NIV this morning, and I hope you do not, but if you do, that same verse says this: "How art thou fallen from heaven." Instead of saying "son of the morning," it takes that out and puts "O morning star." That may not seem like much to the average person, but when you go to Revelation 2:28 and Revelation 22:16, you will find that the term "morning star" is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, what that Bible did to the devil was take out the name that he had and then put in the name of Christ for the very devil, destroying Christ's deity. Yet, as I speak this morning, 99% of the Baptist churches in this city, the pastors are standing in a pulpit telling you that the NIV is a more reliable, a better translation, and putting down the King James Bible. All the while, it takes away the deity of Christ and gives it to the devil. God's people go right along with it.

In the Old Testament, when God gave the Jews the law, the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, number one was:

*Exodus 20:3*

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

You know what Israel did. They brought in Baal worship. They worshiped bulls. They worshiped the sun. They worshiped golden calves. They worshiped female deities, you name it. They all took something and took the place of God by getting rid of Christ and putting something that was likened to the devil in its place.

Later on, when Christ comes at the first coming of Christ, most people are not even aware of this, that the real issue that they had with Christ was over His deity. He claimed to be the Son of God. We use that phrase a lot. We talk about it a lot. Most people do not know what that phrase means. Turn over to John 5:18. Here is a definitive verse, and you want to mark this in your Bible. This is the definitive verse on the term, "the Son of God." This is why the Jews went ballistic every time Christ claimed to be the Son of God. Let me show you what it is.

*John 5:18*

*Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

The term "the Son of God" in its final definition means that Jesus Christ is very God. That is what they were upset about. This is the verse that referenced who He was in His deity.

When He goes to the Gentiles under Paul, and this is Paul's ministry from Acts 13 and on into the New Testament, we see the Gentiles doing the exact same thing. The devil has been at work all down through history trying to fundamentally dethrone Christ and make Him a lesser God than very God Himself.

While Christ was about His earthly ministry, down in Alexandria, Egypt, there already was a university that was well-founded and well-working. At that time of the first coming of Christ, and literally about a hundred years before Christ showed up, Alexandria, Egypt, as far as the world was concerned, was the seat of knowledge. It was the place where all knowledge was relative from, and it was everything and recognized as everything. The great library of Alexandria was on par to be one of the wonders of the world. It was incredible as far as the knowledge that they had amassed. They had amassed the knowledge of the Babylonians and the Hittites and all of the great empires that had come and gone. All was there in that great library at Alexandria.

When the Bible began to get circulated out and go into churches, just like if I was passing out Bibles to you and it was the first Bibles anybody ever had, we got millions of them. So we are throwing them out, giving them to everybody. In time, people got the Bible that did not believe God, that did not believe the things of Christ. That Bible made its way down to Alexandria, Egypt. There in that great bastion of theology, there were some men who did not believe that Jesus Christ was God. They did not believe a lot of things the Bible teaches. They began to go through the Bible and change the Bible in over 60,000 places. They believed that the Babylonians and the Greek philosophers, they all believed that they all were counterparts of Christianity. So where they did not agree with the Bible, they changed the Bible to go along with it. That became where our two lines of Bibles come from. I am not getting into a lesson on manuscript evidence this morning. But at the end of the day, now you had two Greek texts. You had a Greek text that this one came from that was pure, that was protected by the church at Antioch and down through the line. Then you had the corrupt text that all the new Bibles come from.

This is why, and I am going to show you in a minute, this is why when you get into the new versions, they take away the deity of Christ, just like I showed you in the book of Isaiah. Because these men down in Alexandria, they believed that Jesus Christ was a begotten God. They did not believe He was the true Son of God. They believed that God had created Him way back in the past, and that He was not equal with God, but a lesser God. That is where they took their position, and that is why they changed it.

### III. Understanding "Son of God" and "Begotten"

Now, this is where we want to look at and understand from the Bible our two key words here. This is going to help you. As I said, this is all an introduction. You have to know this before we move into next week to begin to take this passage apart.

The first word is the word we are going to leave here today, knowing what the Bible definition of the word "begotten" is. That is very important. The second phrase we are going to look at, or the term, is going to be "to come out of" or "to come forth," like we saw in Proverbs 8. The idea that Christ was a begotten God, as I said, comes from the inability to understand these two words and put them in a proper context within the Bible. Many of the American cult groups, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, the Church of Christ, they all take that position.

Take your Bible and turn over to John 1:18. Let me show you another example here. It says in John 1:18:

*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.*

That verse found in your King James Bible says that Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son. That is the proper term, biblically. If you would have a New World Translation, which is the official Jehovah's Witness Bible, that verse would say this: "No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten God hath declared him." They take the "begotten Son" out and make Jesus Christ the "begotten God." The reason is because that is what the boys down in Alexandria did, and that is where that Bible comes from.

If you had an NIV, the NIV takes out "begotten" completely out of the verse and makes some vague statement about God, "the one and only," and then puts a footnote at the bottom telling you that some of the later manuscripts have "begotten Son" in it, but telling you that they are not reliable manuscripts. So, you see that every new Bible will either leave it out, change it, or completely in some way bring it around that Christ was a begotten God. The reason they do this is because those Bibles come out of Alexandria. I am not getting into this this morning, but this is why we only stay and preach and teach the King James Bible. This is why we do it. It is the only pure Bible out there.

Now, let me show you another one. Look at 1 John 5. Pick it up in verse 5. It says:

*1 John 5:5-7*

*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

Now, that is the greatest verse in all the Bible that says Jesus Christ is God. "These three are one." In your NIV, the verse is completely changed, and it does not say that these three are one. It

simply says that these three are in agreement. That does not make much sense. Me and Zach are in agreement. Me and Will are in agreement, but we are not one. You see the problem. Again, the reason for that is that the translation of that text came from Alexandria, and they did not believe that. They want to destroy the deity of Christ and who He really is.

Now let me give you a definitive verse on the word "begotten," and you will want to get this down. If you are a Bible student, if you are not a Bible student, do not worry about it, just kind of nod off, and I will be done here in a little bit.

*John 3:16*

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

"Only begotten Son." Notice it is not a begotten God; it is His begotten Son.

*John 1:14*

*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.*

There is the definition of the word "begotten," that Christ was the begotten Son. The standard teaching is that some way back when God decided to create another God that was going to be a lesser God that was not going to be equal with Him. That was Jesus Christ. So it comes out not "begotten Son," but "begotten God."

Let's find out where a real close definition of what "begotten" means. I am going to show you it has nothing to do with being back in someplace in eternity. Take your Bible and look at Acts 13. I know we are moving around here. This is probably more Bible movement than you have had in a long time in your life. Nothing like a Bible to clean up a seminary education.

Look at Acts 13:33. I am going to show you, I talk about the Bible always interpreting itself. I am going to show you how this works. Look at verse 33:

*Acts 13:33*

*God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

Now you want to mark "this day." Look at Hebrews 1:5.

*Hebrews 1:5*

*For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

From the Bible itself, we now know that Christ was not begotten back somewhere in eternity. How do we know that? Because He says "this day." In eternity, there was no time; there could be no day. So we know now that when we talk about Christ being begotten, it is not in the distant past; it has to be somewhere after Genesis 1, where time now is present. See how that Bible

clears itself up? You have to just call God a liar to continue to hold in a teaching that He was begotten someplace in the past, in eternity past, when He clearly tells you in two places that it was a day.

I am going to show you even closer. Let's stay right there in Hebrews 1, and I am going to read verse 5, and then we are going to read verse 6.

*Hebrews 1:5-6*

*For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

*And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*

Then Christ was not begotten one second before the first coming of Christ when He was born in Matthew 2 or 3 and in the book of Luke. The begetting of Christ as His Son was in a day in time, and it was a time when He came into this world through Mary. The day He was begotten of God was the day God brought Him into this world at the first coming of Christ. 1 Timothy 3:16, "God manifested in the flesh," that is what it is a reference to, and Christ was not begotten one minute, one second before He came into this world, born of a virgin, Mary.

That is not all. Stay in Hebrews. Here is another great verse for you. Look at verse 8:

*Hebrews 1:8*

*But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

"Thy throne, O God." See that verse tell you that Jesus Christ was God? He has got a throne. He did not say "thy throne, O begotten God." He did not say "thy throne, O begotten Son." There is a verse telling you that He was the begotten Son when He came into this world, but as far as God was concerned, He is God Himself, always was and always will be. There is the clearest verse in the Bible that Christ was God, declared by God Himself.

So from the Bible, when Christ was begotten, He was born into this world as the first man born of God. As the mystery of godliness tells us in 1 Timothy 3:16, it is without controversy because when you get into the Bible and you stay with the Bible, there is no controversy to it. There is only a controversy when man wants to change the Bible, get out of the Bible, because he wants to teach something the Bible does not say. That is why we stick with the Bible here. It is just that simple. It is my opinion and your opinion; it does not work too hoots in the wind. All that matters here is what says the scriptures. That is all that matters. We do not interpret the Bible; let the Bible interpret itself. I am not going to get up there and tell you what my opinion is on His being begotten. I am going to take you and show you how the Bible defined it. I am not going to get up and say, "Well, I think that means the Son of God means..." I am going to take you to the Bible and show you what the Son of God term means. That is the way we operate.

This mystery of godliness to the church is Christ being manifested in the flesh and begotten of God as the Son of God, who is the visible appearance of the invisible God. Hebrews 1:3 says that Christ was the express person of His image, simply God coming down to man in the form of the God-man, Jesus Christ. Most people do not even know this. When you lay out the three names of Christ, it is the Lord Jesus Christ. They are all very significant.

- The first word, "Lord," that is His deity. That means He is God. That is the word for God. He is the Lord; He is God.
- Then "Jesus" was the earthly man that was born, the manifestation of that.
- Then "Christ" is Christos, or the anointed one for the job that God had in Him to do.

So in His title, in His name, it is the Lord God Almighty, Jesus the God-man who was manifested in the flesh, Christ, Christos, the anointed one to fulfill God's plan that God had for Him to fulfill. It is real simple when you just put it to the Bible.

#### IV. Christ: The Visible Manifestation of God

The second term I want you to see and understand is found in Proverbs 8, in verse 24. This is where He says, "When there were no depths, I was brought forth." I want to talk about the difference between being begotten and being brought forth. We now know that "begotten" is the first coming of Christ, but let's get all this together. It is quite remarkable.

God obviously had a plan. We know that, and man is part of that plan. I have laid it out many, many times that God wanted to use the nation of Israel in the Old Testament under the guidelines of the kingdom of heaven. He wants to use the church in the New Testament under the guidelines of the kingdom of God. We know that. But here is the problem. John 4:24 says that God is a Spirit. You cannot see God. God is invisible. So how does God communicate with man? How does God have fellowship with man? How does God come down and partake of anything with man if God is a Spirit? Would you go to a place, when you walked into a house, and suddenly you heard this big booming voice talking to you? You would be out of there so fast. He had to identify with man. He had to identify with man because God is a Spirit; He is invisible. So to have any kind of relationship with man, God had to manifest Himself somehow.

Back in eternity, at some point, and I do not know where, the Bible does not say where for sure, God manifested out of Himself a visible image of His invisible person. He stepped out of the Godhead and manifested Himself as the Son of God. He did this term "Son of God" for a number of reasons because when you lay it all out, and we do not have time to get into it this morning, He was showing the model of an obedience for a child to their parents or for me as a Christian to my Heavenly Father. So He took on the form of a man, even though He was very God, and He made Himself obedient to Himself as a model.

Most human beings have a really tough time grasping that. They say they do not get it, and they will scratch their head and say, "Well, I do not understand." Let me tell you something, if I

understood everything on the level that God did, we would not need God. I do not understand how a brown cow can eat green grass and give white milk, but he does. There are certain things that God, who can do whatever He wants to do, that He does. The fact that I do not understand it does not mean that it is not true. You find a lot of people like that; if they cannot figure it out, then it cannot be true. There are a lot of things obviously in life that you cannot figure out that are not true. But when it comes to dealing with God, let me tell you something, He stepped out of that Godhead, and this is what Proverbs 8:22-31 is talking about. He stepped out of that Godhead, and He manifested Himself so that He could have some kind of identifiable relationship with man. Then God made Him the mediator between me and God Himself, the God-man, God manifested in the flesh.

Turn over to John 17. I will show you Jesus talking to His Father and saying this exact same thing to us that I am saying to you this morning.

*John 17:8*

*For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

That verse says that when you get into the word of God and become a Bible student, not somebody who just fools around with the milk of the word, but you get into the Bible and learn the Bible and you receive it as the word of God, then you will get this mystery of God being manifested in the flesh from the words of God, that He came out of His Father.

In the Old Testament, in the kingdom of heaven, He manifests Himself as the Angel of the Lord. You will find a reference to it in Galatians 4:14, numerous places in the Old Testament where Christ is showing up in some kind of bodily manifestation, not as the Son of God, but most of the time as the Angel of the Lord, or commonly called the Captain of the Lord's host. I do not know what kind of body He had. I am not sure what He looked like. I would say that probably looked just like Christ when He showed up the first time because nobody would have known what the other Christ down the line was going to look like. But He did not manifest—this is my point—He did not manifest Himself in the Old Testament as the Son of God. He manifested Himself as the Angel of the Lord to Israel because Israel needed a visible relationship with God, and God is invisible. So in the Old Testament, He chose to do it through Christ as the Angel of the Lord.

## V. The Church: Begotten of God

When the church age comes, the New Testament, He has to be—He now comes in the physical form of the Son of God because now we are going to go into the church age. Now we are going to go into the spiritual kingdom of God. Now some things are going to change. Christ is going to go back to heaven and sit at the right hand of God the Father, but He needs to leave a bodily presence here. So He establishes what the Bible calls the church, which another name for the church is simply the body of Christ. Now Christ dwells in the church, inside believers.

The Bible says in 1 John 3:2:

*1 John 3:2*

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

See, He is manifesting Himself through you. If you ever grasp this, it will help you clean up your life. You are the visible appearance of an invisible God to the people you work with, to the people in your family, to your neighbors, to everybody around you. They do not know God. They know nothing about God. If God came down and knocked on their door with a big booming voice and it was invisible, they would be calling the police and everybody else. So how did God decide to do it? God said, "You know what I will do? I will manifest Myself in that person who becomes a Christian, and they become the visible appearance of the invisible God." That changed your perspective on your lawless lifestyle a little bit, does it not? Probably not, but good preaching.

At the first coming of Christ, He is coming into the world, begotten this day as the Son of God, with the purpose of indwelling believers, you and me, having fellowship and a relationship with us through His word and through being us, now being born again. Now we become begotten of God. Look at 1 Corinthians 4:15. Paul speaking here, he says:

*1 Corinthians 4:15*

*For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*

You see, Jesus Christ was the first man born of God, begotten of God. But once He came to this earth, manifested Himself, was begotten of God, then you and I, when we get saved, become the begotten of God. Look over in Philemon 1:10.

*Philemon 1:10*

*I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:*

Then Paul uses the word "begotten" when he wins somebody to Christ because he knew that when Christ came down and was begotten Son of God, when He died on the cross and Paul got saved, or you got saved, then you and I became the begotten son of God. We are not the first begotten. We are not the only begotten in the sense of Christ, but we are in the series of Christ dying. He is called the first begotten of the dead, Jesus Christ. You know why? Because He is the first man begotten of God, born of God, that will never die. That will be invaluable to you as you move up the levels of learning the Bible, if you ever decide you really want to learn the Bible, understanding the concept of Christ being begotten as the Son of God, equal with God, never, never, never being a begotten God.

## VI. The Model of Evangelism

I told you a minute ago that there are so many models here. Christ coming at the first coming of Christ sets up so many models, and there are models that you can take and study each one of them. I have a model from Christ of what I ought to love in life because the Bible talks about the things that Christ loves and the things that He hates. I have a model in Christ of where I ought to

go and who I ought to hang out with. I have a model in Christ of how I need to react and respond to circumstances in life, all kinds of models. I have a model in Christ of what my relationship should be with God in a Father-Son relationship through obedience—a great model.

But also, we have the model of evangelism. The model of evangelism. A couple of weeks ago, I talked to you about penetrating cultures, how every culture out there is different, and that if you are going to win men and women to Christ, you have to:

- Understand their culture.
- Understand how to penetrate their culture.
- Get in there and reach them with the Gospel.

It is that simple. That is exactly what Christ did. That is exactly what God did. Here is another verse, Philippians 2:6-8. He says:

*Philippians 2:6-8*

*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." See that? He is equal with God, and He thought it not robbery. He came in the form of God, the Son of God, but He was equal with God. You have to see that in that verse. "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

The great model for evangelism is real simple here. It is God who had Christ sitting with Him on the throne. He was the aristocracy of heaven. The Bible says He was the apple of God's eye. But God knew that you and I were lost without hope and without Christ. God knew that He had to do something for you and for me. He had to come down and eradicate what we could not eradicate: our sin. So the Bible says that God manifested Himself in the New Testament as the Lord Jesus Christ.

What Christ did, remember now, He had always been with God. Proverbs 8, He came out way back when. We will see it next week. I do not know when He came out, but He had been around for a while when He manifested Himself out of there, and He was with God, equal with God. He was the apple of God's eye. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Then what happened to reach you and me? Jesus Christ had to leave the splendor of glory. He had to leave the reputation of being God. He had to come down and take on the form of a servant where everybody up in heaven was bowing down to Him and catering to Him because He was God Almighty. Now He bowed down, and He washed people's feet. He healed the lepers. He went where the sick were. He did what needed to be done. He left the culture of heaven. He left

the splendor of heaven. He left the glory of heaven. What a change that must have been for Him, from walking the streets of gold to the dusty, muddy dirt streets of Palestine. From people who were praising Him, giving the adoration as the Son of God, to people who came down and were spitting in His face, pulling out His beard, laughing at Him, making fun of Him, denying everything He was.

But at any click of the fingers, at any blink of the eye, He could have wiped out the whole planet and said, "I am here, and I am king." But He did not. You know why? Because He had a plan, and that plan was you and me. If He would have never penetrated my culture, I would have never gotten saved. If He would have never penetrated your culture, you would have never gotten saved. But why then will you not transcend your culture and give what He gave to you to somebody else? That is the job of the church. It is us not having the glory here, not having everything that we have here. It is not putting the emphasis on life here for what we want and what we have. No, it is about taking and seeing and understanding all that we have that God has given us, and then taking it and transcending into other people's cultures, leaving who we are, putting it aside, even though we may be a son of God in the aristocracy of heaven, we take on the form of a servant.

I will use this as an illustration because it is so prominent in what we do, and especially what we are doing today. I look at that in what we are doing at Restart today. It is a thing where that is another culture down there, and most people look at it and say, "Oh, yucky, I do not want to get in that. It is real filthy down there. It is real dirty down there, going out in the street and hot and giving all these people, and they want to come up and hug you. They want to come up and shake your hand, and I do not have enough hand cleaner. You do not know where they have been and what they have done and all of those things." I get all that. I really do. But I have to say something to you: What would we be if God looked at us before He came down and said the same exact thing? You know He could have because He was holy, and there was not anything holy about anybody down here. He was clean, and we all were unclean. He could have just as easily said, "I am not getting down there in all of that. Well, I have this white robe on up here. I am not going to soil that. I cannot go down there."

Your job and my job right now, no matter what we do, but our job as a church is to go where the culture needs to be penetrated. Unfortunately, God just does not want to save rich people. God does not want to save clean people. God does not want to just save people who do not have any infirmities or do not have any problems. It would be nice if that is the way it was, but that is not the way it is. When He came down and He took a look at you and me the first time, I am sure He wanted to gag. I am sure He probably felt on the human side exactly what so many of God's people feel when they see an opportunity, and it just does not match up to where they think it ought to be. But I thank God that in spite of that, He came down to me, and that is the motivating factor. I cannot speak for you this morning, but that is the motivating factor for me. That is what sends me where most people are unsendable because I fully understand where I was, and He came down to me. I realized that He left the splendor of heaven and transcended my culture for me to get saved. So my job now—your job too, but I am not speaking to you, I am speaking to

me—my job now is to simply transcend cultures, be that witness that will tell them about God, a God that loves them, a God that died for them.

That is why He is living inside you. That is why Christ went back to heaven. That is why God just did not continue Him on after the resurrection and let Him stay down here and do what He did. He was the first begotten. He was the only begotten. But after He got put back to heaven and He started a church age, now you and I are the begotten son of God. He expected you and me to do and carry on what He started by giving us the model. He left the splendor of heaven; you and I leave the splendor of our homes. Christ, the only begotten Son, then because of Him, we can be begotten of God, born by the Spirit, by a new birth.

Look at 1 Peter 1:3, and we will leave it here. Next week, we will get into this, and we will really begin to break it down now that we have got some things defined.

*1 Peter 1:3*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

See, He says "begotten us again" because man was once alive in Adam, but Adam sinned, and the Bible says that death passed upon all men, that all men now are sinners. So when Christ came down, was the only begotten Son of God, and now we know that He was not begotten one second before the first coming of Christ, when He came into this world manifested as the visible appearance of the invisible God, He came down with a purpose to die for the sins of the world, go back to heaven, and finish His plan, give us the ability to be a begotten son of God through salvation, trusting Christ as your own personal Savior. That is what He has done.

All right, next week we will break down Proverbs 8. I would like to have every head bowed, every eye closed here for just a second. Next week, you will see how much easier it will be now that we have this introduction.