

# The Person of Christ

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Alex Murdo Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] We shall first of all read we shall read two or three short passages. The first one is in Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 10.

Isaiah 7 verse 10. Moreover the Lord speak again unto Ahaz saying ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God.

Ask it either in the depth or in the height above. But Ahaz said I will not ask neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said hear ye now O house of David is it a small thing for you to weary men but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel that and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. The next passage is in the same book of Isaiah and chapter 9 at the beginning of the chapter.

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Sebulun and the land of an afterlife. And afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations.

[ 1 : 55 ] The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation and not increased the joy. The joy before thee according to the joy in harvest and us men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder the rod of his oppressor as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire 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 Counselor the Mighty God the Everlasting Father the Prince of Peace of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it henceforth even forever the seal of the Lord of hosts will perform this and in the New Testament we may read in 1st John and chapter 1 1st epistle of John chapter 1 that which was from the beginning which we have heard which we have seen with our eyes which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life for the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son

Jesus Christ and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full this then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all if we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth but if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleansed us from all sin if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness if we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar and his word is not in us may the Lord bless these readings from his word every Christian man or woman or child I think would agree that no one could be invited to speak upon a greater subject than I have agreed to speak on here during this weekend and while one feels honored to be asked to speak at all at a conference of this nature one feels especially honored

I think to be invited to speak on the subject of the passion of Christ and accompanying that feeling there is a feeling of fear and trepidation in attempting to lead others' thoughts with regard to such a wonderful glorious subject as we have here today Professor McMillan last night in describing to us

the work of the Holy Spirit resembled the Spirit's function to light that is lit in order to illumine a place that would otherwise be in darkness in order that people can see the liniments of perhaps a building and the beauty of a building well you can imagine what the feeling of preachers of the gospel must be when they realize that one of the passions of the Godhead the Holy Spirit works and speaks in a way that in a sense hides himself in order to glorify another how much more ought we to seek to hide ourselves when that is true when one of the Godhead as it were obscures in a sense I hope I'm not misunderstood when I use that word his own glory in order that the light of the glory of another will shine brightly before the eyes of men and I shall try today to first of all bring before you certain points of a more general nature as we had before us last night leading us to the doctrine of the passions strictly speaking I found it difficult as some of you can understand to determine how to deal with a subject in three lectures and the conclusion I came to was that we should try and meditate first of all on the truth of

[ 8 : 48 ] Christ's deity that is that Christ is God and secondly the truth of his humanity that Christ is man and thirdly perhaps if we are enabled to as it were unite the two together in the way in which they are in fact already really and eternally united in his one passion now I think it is useful to begin by saying a word about the absolute significance of the this doctrine because of obviously of the significance of the passion that we are interested in if we are to ask for example why do we and Christians in every generation and in every part of the world regard their own religion to be not one of many religions on an equal plane with other religions that people claim to contain either the whole truth or much of the truth there is one answer to the question why the uniqueness of the Christian religion and why to use an unpopular word the intolerance of the Christian religion in its attitude to other religions and we must distinguish between intolerance towards religions and intolerance towards individuals fellow human beings who may follow these religions the answer is the Lord Jesus Christ he it is who makes the difference he is the very heart and substance of our religion and because he is what he is we ourselves and all others are bound before God to not only pay heed to what he has to say but to submit ourselves wholly and forever to the dictates of his will now

I wanted also to indicate to you in the beginning that the doctrine of the passion of Christ has suffered in the world and within the church and some of you know that it was one of the earliest doctrines of the Christian religion to suffer and I shall just briefly go over some of the ways in which Christ through the doctrine of his passion so dearly held by his people was attacked at a very early stage in the life of the New Testament church as early indeed as the first three centuries there were first of all those who claimed that

Christ was a mere man in other words they denied his deity these and I don't wish to enter into details about the historical aspects of these false doctrines or heresies they were called the original ones were called Ebionites and there was another group known as Nazarenes who denied the doctrine of the divinity or the deity of Christ then later on and before very long there were those who swung to the other extreme and who made it their duty to deny the humanity of Christ some of them claimed that he was merely as they put it a phantasm that there was no reality to this appearance as it were almost ghost like that had been seen of men in the world and there were some amongst them in order to safeguard some realism in their doctrine who claimed that there was a real substance indeed in the person who had appeared and lived for over 30 years in Galilee and Judea but that he was made of a kind of ethereal substance almost an air like substance that had no lasting reality at all and then there were those who resisted the witness of the church defense in defense of the human nature of the

Lord by attacking as theologians would put it they attacked the integrity of his human nature that is they conceded that he had a human nature but that it was not a human nature as we possess human nature it wasn't human nature in the ordinary accepted common sense of that term they would say that Christ had a human body and a human soul but that instead of having the spirit as man has in relation to his soul's exercises God word that that aspect of his soul nature you might say was replaced in him by the logos you remember that is the word that

[ 15 : 34 ] John uses when he says in the beginning was the word and the word was God they maintained that this logos who was with God took possession of this nearly human nature possessed of body and soul and thus that he was like the other men but in a very real sense unlike the other men as to his humanity now when people began to answer these that last heresy what happened was that many people in the church swung to another extreme and they began to claim

that the Lord had two natures but because of the difficulty of understanding how anyone could have two natures they solved the mystery by claiming that he must have also two persons that heresy was known as the

Nestorian heresy and obviously the church of Christ had to resist that as a false doctrine which would have undermined the very life of the church and left the world in total spiritual darkness and then as a result of people's eagerness to defend the truth against that particular heresy there was a swing to another extreme the other extreme being that there were those who concluded that if he has only the one person therefore he can only have the one nature so the end result of that defense of the truth as they believed they were attempting to do was to have a Christ with one person indeed but with also one nature composed to state it in a general sort of way of a mixture you might say of the two natures the divine and the human the effect of which of course is to result in there being neither a divine nor a human because one has destroyed the other that also was one of the heresies in the early church now

I suppose all that sounds very obscure to most of us but I think it is helpful to Christians to first of all have an awareness of the fact that the passion of the Lord has been assailed at a very early stage in the history of the church you must remember that we're talking not about the teachings of pagan people who made no profession of Christianity we are talking about people who are within the bounds of the Christian church as early as the first three centuries and there appears to have been a constant assault upon the doctrine of the passion of the Lord and consequently upon the Lord himself and as we saw some of these assaults stemming from people's concern and anxiety to defend the truth against some other false doctrine and so we discovered that in regard to this the very substance of the

Christian religion there is nothing new under the sun I had wanted to quote to you views expressed by some modern theologians people who are in places of great influence some of them in some of the churches on the continent of Europe and in Britain and in America people beside whom we ourselves feel so utterly insignificant and feel that our words are so unimportant and vain and ineffective in the world because of a name that people have for scholarship and for research and study of the Bible and of theology and of the history of the church down through the ages I think I will quote one individual of that class to you who wrote I am he said a liberal Christian because I believe that Christ is the way of truth through life now this man in the context from which I took that statement therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows but what we must remember is that the subordination along with the deity are brought together in the mystery of the passion of the saviour they are not contradictions because of the glorious mystery of his special he is an everlasting being thou

[ 21 : 56 ] Lord God goes on addressing him 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 and they all shall wax old as to thy garment and thou shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed but thou art the same and thy ears shall not fail is that not God well it is just as clear that it is the saviour the man Christ Jesus the one mediator between God and men we find we find that he's attributed with authority that only God can possess for example the authority to save at the beginning I indicated how salvation is portrayed for us in the scriptures the only salvation that matters the only one worth thinking about and possessing is a divine salvation in every aspect of it it's a divine salvation well

Christ is the author of salvation I give unto them he says eternal life I give unto them what man or angel could dare in the presence of God or men men whose eyes have been opened to their own need as accountable creatures before God who are to live forever which of them enlightened in that way could bear to listen to man nor angels declaring I give unto you eternal life and you shall never perish neither shall any man pluck you out of my hand man or he could not there would be neither hope nor comfort for any of us in any created being uttering such words but there is every hope and every comfort for us when we hear them uttered by the lips of the son of

Mary because we know he speaks truth and he is truth and he is the author of salvation he has authority he shows us even in his lowly state in this world authority to forgive sins who can forgive sins some of the Jews said but God only and that was one occasion on which they made no error they spoke correctly nobody has authority to forgive sins supposing you were a most devoted follower of a religion that provides human means of forgiving sins and supposing your devotion extended to your very last breath rest assured that it would still hold true and that there is no who has authority to forgive sins in this sense in view of eternity and in view of a divine judgment none

but

God only but Christ not only exercised that authority but immediately on one occasion established that he wasn't wrongly assuming that authority he performed a miracle in order to display before the eyes of men that his claim was not an empty one at all and in doing so he was showing them that he is God he is God I might tire you because I know I know for myself that these are heavy weighty doctrines that we are dealing with here at this conference and I shouldn't like to exhaust you before you have begun probably

God finally was concerned he reveals that all men should honor this person but they should honor him and God was careful to reveal to what extent all men should honor him the God who claims for himself that all beings shall honor him and who is so concerned about receiving honor that he shall receive honor and he shall be glorified world without end by some in a place of bliss adoring and worshiping and praising him eternally by others in the place of the lost but our interest today is this in particular that whatever glory

[ 28 : 16 ] God demands as his own he demands that all men honor the son the saviour as they honor himself and he has appointed a day wherein he shall judge the world God and I think every Christian ought find very easy to grasp that the exercise of universal judgment and a universal judgment that is to finalize not only in purpose but in act and in personal experience the destiny eternally of every creature God has been pleased to bring into existence by the time this world ends every

Christian I think finds it perfectly easy to accept that God would not trust such an exercise of such a judgment to any of his creatures but there is a man so God himself expressed it through the apostle preaching in Athens that he shall judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained but he is no mere man we could answer Paul's statement by saying we shall accept your teaching with regard to the judgment day and to the person of the judge if you are talking about God but

Paul had no doubt that he was talking about God the God who had become incarnate in the passion of the judge as our saviour I think I feel very much conscious of the fact that I have failed to bring this to you in a way that affects your heart and my own heart that we should pray I can at least perhaps attempt to remedy my own deficiency by exhorting you to pray and myself to pray that we should become more conscious inwardly in our hearts that as our saviour as the one who came closest to each one of us to save us from our sins and as we heard last night to conform us to himself that he is the very

God who made us at the first that he is our creator that he is the very God in whom we live and move and have our being that he is the God whose sovereign rule extends not only over his church but over all the universe visible and invisible that he is the one by whom all things were created whether there be things in heaven or on things visible or invisible whether they be angels or men principalities or it doesn't matter at what level of dignity of being all things were made by him and all things were made for him and in him they all consist and we have to remember therefore that I think one way in which in which we might be helped to to lay hold in our hearts with faith upon this the supreme glory of the saviour that he is God is by perhaps thinking of Mary the virgin his mother who had every right to think of the passion the passion who had been conceived in her and begotten of her by the power of the Holy Ghost as the very one who had by his power created herself in form of her own mother and who had sustained her in life every moment of her existence because that was the passion whom she now carried and whom she was to bear bring forth into the world that she had a right and that in fact she came to understand these truths with regard to the glory of the

[ 34 : 03 ] Saviour that when she confessed her sins before God and as you know a gracious Jewish woman would have a very profound sense in her soul of the greatness of God whom she worshipped and that when she confessed her sins before her God that she came to understand that her sins had been against the very one whom she herself had brought forth into the world and in conclusion when she would contemplate his death a sort of sorrow in a sense to her when she would remember that she was contemplating the death of God and I do not usually use that term in connection with the suffering and death of

Christ but the second passion of the Trinity God and the man who was nailed to the cross was a man who claimed to be God manifesting flesh and we are all men are left with a choice between the three alternatives and I leave that thought with you that when you are dealing with the unconverted some of them who are very ready to discuss the Christian religion that you constantly reiterate that

your authority for your beliefs is Christ and therefore is God and if he is not God that either he must be the biggest deceiver who has ever walked the earth or else he must have been insane or else he is what he claims to be well we don't have any doubts about which alternative to choose for the Stuart has probably a point on the thing is to to an struggle and can you have are other do about other MB or can make amazing thought the way good I