

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Itinerary/Identity of Jesus Christ

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 with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Not only can Jesus be identified by the names given unto Him, but also by His itinerary during his earthly sojourn. Some of the names assigned to Jesus had to do with some of the places He visited, and His itinerary had something to do with the fulfillment of prophecies made concerning Him.

First of all, the itinerary and identity of Jesus began in heaven. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). "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" (1 Timothy 3:16).

In fulfillment of prophecy, the earthly itinerary of Jesus began in "Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:4-6). This event fulfilled another prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Not only was Jesus to sit and reign on the throne of David, but both David and Jesus were from the same town of Bethlehem (1 Samuel 17:12).

After the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, an angel of the Lord directed Joseph to flee into Egypt with Jesus and His mother. This part of the earthly itinerary of Jesus fulfilled another prophecy: "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matthew 3:13-15; Hosea 11:1).

Upon the return of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus from Egypt, they "came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:23). When Jesus was crucified, the title on His cross identified His early childhood itinerary with the words, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19). Jesus also identified himself in this fashion to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:8). This mark of Christ's identity may have been a reproach to some of the Jews (John 1:46), but it tends to identify the Son of God.

The name Christian was given to the disciples of Jesus while the apostles Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch (Acts 11:26), and that name was later endorsed by both Paul (Acts 26:28-29), and Peter (1 Peter 4:14-16). Jesus could be called a Nazarene because it (Nazareth) was the city where Jesus spent His boyhood years, even as some of His disciples were called Galileans (Acts 2:7), and John was called "John the Baptist" because of his mission to baptize (Matthew 3:1). No other one claiming to be the Messiah could lay claim to the itinerary or identity of Jesus of Nazareth.

"And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying . . . The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matthew 4:13-16). Not only was much of Jesus' preaching done in the regions of Galilee, this is where He began to make disciples and choose His apostles. Some 750 years before Jesus began His earthly sojourn, Isaiah the prophet outlines a portion — itinerary and some of the salient marks of His identity.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus often avoided Jerusalem and the final confrontation with those who were determined to apprehend, torture, and crucify "the Son of God," because His "hour was not yet come." But eventually, Jesus knew that He had to face Jerusalem and the part it played in His itinerary and identity as "the Son of God."

The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah established a reputation which lives to this day. In the eyes of the Jews, Nazareth and Galilee held dubious reputations as far as prophets were concerned (John 1:46; 7:52). Jesus confounded those who held these latter concepts, and established Himself as "Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matthew 21:11). But Jerusalem holds the all-time record for the persecution, imprisonment, and death of God's holy prophets (Matthew 23:29-36; Luke 13:33-35). Jesus was not born in Jerusalem as the Book of Mormon falsely stated, but He was certainly condemned and crucified there on Calvary.

President Roosevelt declared December 7, 1941 as "a day of infamy" when the Japanese perpetrated their sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, but Jerusalem laid claim to that title when it crucified the sinless Son of God on Calvary some 1900 years before Pearl Harbor. Attempts have been made to delete these events from history, and to exonerate those who were guilty of such ignominious deeds, but history cannot be forever buried, whether it be good or bad.

When Jesus made His earthly advent, He "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3), and this phase of His identity was stressed during His earthly sojourn. After His death and burial, not only was His claim to be the son of David vindicated as He ascended to David's throne, but He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). When Jesus claimed on earth that He was the Son of God, it cost Him His life because, said the Jews, "he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). Jesus was not crucified because of His earthly itinerary in or identity with Nazareth, but because of His claim to be the Son of God.

Where did the itinerary of Jesus take Him when He left this earth? He ascended into the clouds of heaven (Acts 1:7-9), "he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Ephesians 4:9-10).

When Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matthew 16:13), several answers were given. But no man can come close to duplicating the itinerary and identity of Jesus, the Son of God.

- P. J. Casebolt

Cancelled Joy?

A new word buzzword that we see popping up these days is "cancel culture." It's also known as "call-out culture" and "outrage culture." You can see it online and in the media. The idea is if you take a stand and speak truth, you may be subject to call-out, outrage, and being canceled by the angry mob. As a result, people have become afraid to step out and stand out. But how much power does the world really have over Christians, anyway? Sure, they can take away many things, but can they strip us of that which is most important? I think not. One such thing this world cannot do is cancel Christian joy. That's because Christian joy is not from this world. According to the Bible, Christian joy comes from our Lord, Jesus the Christ who reigns in heaven.

- Nehemiah 8:10 - "Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength"
- Isaiah 61:10 - "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God"
- Romans 15:13 - "May the God of hope fill you with all joy"
- Philippians 4:4 - "Rejoice in the Lord"

Why is this important? When your joy comes from Christ and is utterly steadfast through suffering, shame, persecution and loss, the world and its culture lose its power over you. You might take a stand the culture despises, and they might attempt to shame and cancel you, but since your joy comes from Christ, they've lost their control.

Cancel culture is not a new thing, by the way. Let me give you a 2000-year-old example of an attempt at cultural control through mob outrage, canceling, and shaming that completely failed because it could not conquer Christian joy. It's found in Acts 5:40–41. The cultural elite were trying to silence the voice of Christians — just like our culture often tries to do. Here's what happened: "They beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name."

That's Christian joy. It's the only kind that ultimately matters, because it's the only kind that survives and thrives in spite of difficult circumstances. If our joy comes from the world — worldly comfort, worldly reward and therefore worldly control — we are subject to the world and not free. Christian joy sets people free. Joy in Christ has always been liberating from cultural control. In getting our joy from heaven, we become free on earth. So, no matter how hard the world tries, it cannot cancel your joy in Christ.

- Scott Hafer

"I Taught Him to Obey!"

I read somewhere that George Washington's mother was asked how she raised such a fine son. Her reply was, "I taught him to obey." Our country needs more mothers like his!

Notice that the will to obey originates in being taught. The Lord said of Abraham: "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him." (Genesis 18:19). For righteousness and justice to thrive in any society, children must be taught to keep the way of the Lord.

All parents have the responsibility of teaching their children obedience to proper authority (cf. Colossians 3:20). The Lord's prescription for preventing societal chaos is this:

"Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men." (Titus 3:1-2). Lives of disobedience are foolish and enslaved (see verse 3). Obedient lives bless families and societies!

- Gary Smalley

* "Failure is the path of least persistence!"

* "Faith can rewrite your future!"

* "If some men grew physically at the rate they grow spiritually, they would spend their lives in a play-pen!"

* "The mind is like a parachute; it doesn't work properly unless it is open!"

* "The one thing worse than a quitter is the man who is afraid to begin!"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)