

**WHY I BELIEVE: GOD'S SON DIED FOR ME**  
**I Cor 1:20-25**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. THREE WEEKS AGO—"I BELIEVE GOD IS FATHER, ALMIGHTY, CREATOR"**

1. WHY I BELIEVE—GOD IS ALMIGHTY CREATOR
  - Evidence of—Biblical Record—Science—Nature
  - Human—Logic—Conscience—Intuition
2. WHY I BELIEVE—GOD IS FATHER
  - a. He chose to become OUR Father
    - Gave us power to become Children of God—by receiving His Son—**Jn 1**
    - Adopted us as His children—**Gal 4**
  - b. God loves us—as a *true* Father
    - God IS love
    - Loves unconditionally
    - Loves sacrificially
    - Forgiving Loves—that restores
  - c. Personal Experience
    - His Spirit comes to us—and enables us to call Him “Abba, Father”—**Gal 4**
    - His Spirit bears witness to our Spirit—we are His children—**Rom 8**

**B. TWO WEEKS AGO—I BELIEVE JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD AND LORD**

1. SON OF GOD
  - a. The Father gave us His Son to save us
  - b. His identity
    1. ‘Only begotten Son’
      - o Eternal—co-equal with God the Father
      - o Pre-incarnate glory—co-creator of universe
      - o Poured out—became Son of Man
    2. Jesus Christ = Savior and Deliverer
2. JESUS IS LORD
  - a. God exalted Him as Lord
    - For His obedience—to death on a cross
    - Restored Son of Man to pre-incarnate glory
  - b. We acknowledge Him as Lord—our key to salvation
3. I BELIEVE HE IS GOD'S SON AND LORD BECAUSE
  - a. Secular historical sources—tell me He lived
  - b. Biblical Record—identifies Him as God's Son and Lord

- c. Logical choice—is ‘Lord’—not Lunatic or Liar
  - d. No human ‘lord’—king—or leader—has been able to save humanity
  - e. All other religious leaders/systems—fall fallen short of salvation
  - f. Uniqueness—powerful miracles and teachings—sinless character
  - g. Testimony—martyrs—church—skeptics
4. I KNOW HE IS GOD’S SON AND LORD—BECAUSE HE HAS CHANGED ME
- **II Cor 5:17**—*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, his is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*
  - Irrefutable—no argument can disprove what a true believer experiences in Christ

### C. LAST WEEK—WHY I BELIEVE GOD’S SON WAS VIRGIN-BORN

1. CHALLENGES FALL SHORT
  - Miracles are possible
  - Biblical accounts are reliable
  - Virgin birth in not a myth—but a historical event
2. BIBLICAL RECORD
  - Old Testament prophecy
  - New Testament fulfillment—verification of OT prophecy
3. IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE
  - Full deity of Christ—supernaturally conceived by God
  - Full humanity of Christ—born of a woman
4. CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS—BASIS FOR HUMAN REDEMPTION
  - a. Perfect Man—inherently sinless
  - b. Divine sacrifice—infinite—paid for all sin
  - c. Our righteousness—comes from Him
    1. Perfect obedience as Son of Man
    2. Perfect being—eternally righteous Son of God—unchanged by incarnation
  - d. Our Pardon—relies on this righteousness

### D. THIS WEEK—“WHY I BELIEVE GOD’S SON DIED FOR ME”

## II. TEXT—I COR 1:20-25

**20** *Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

### III. SUFFERED—CRUCIFIED—DEAD—BURIED—DESCENDED INTO HELL

#### A. SECULAR ACCOUNTS

1. **Josephus**—1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian—recorded his execution
2. **Phlegon of Tralleis**—1<sup>st</sup> century Greek historian—recorded eclipse at time of Jesus' death
3. **Tacitus**—2<sup>nd</sup> century Roman historian—said Christ was put to death under Pontius Pilate
4. **Lucien of Samosata**—2<sup>nd</sup> century satirist—said Christ was crucified in Palestine

#### B. BIBLICAL RECORD

##### 1. OT PROPHECY

###### a. **Psalm 22**

- **Mocked** (Ps. 22:7–8; cf. Matt. 27:31).
- **Pierced** hands and feet (Ps. 22:16; cf. Luke 23:33).
- **Cast lots** for his garments (Ps. 22:18; cf. John 19:23–24).

###### b. **Isaiah 53**

- **Rejected** by his own people (Isa. 53:3; cf. John 1:10–11; 7:5, 48).
- **Silent** before his accusers (Isa. 53:7; cf. Matt. 27:12–19).
- **Crucified** with thieves (Isa. 53:12; cf. Mark 15:27–28).
- **Prayed** for his persecutors (Isa. 53:12; cf. Luke 23:34).
- **Buried** in rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9; cf. Matt. 27:57–60).

###### c. **Zech 12**

- **Pierced** side (Zech. 12:10; cf. John 19:34).

##### 2. JESUS PROPHECIED HIS DEATH—AT LEAST 4 TIMES

- o **Mk 8**—after confession at Caesarea
- o **Mk 9**—after Transfiguration
- o **Mk 9**—after exorcism of boy
- o **Mk 10**—on way to Jerusalem

##### 3. PETER'S SERMON—CONFRONTED PERPETRATORS

- o **Acts 2:23**—you nailed him to the cross and put Him to death

##### 4. PAUL'S THEOLOGY

- o **Rom 5:6**—*For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.*

## 5. CHRIST'S POST-RESURRECTION TESTIMONY

- o **Rev 1:17-18**— *Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.*

## C. BIBLICAL MESSAGE = THE SON OF GOD BECAME MAN AND DIED FOR OUR SINS

## IV. CHALLENGES TO BIBLICAL MESSAGE

### A. TWO BASIC ARGUMENTS

1. FROM THE 'WISE MAN'—UNREASONABLE—FOOLISHNESS
2. FROM THE SCRIBE—NO EVIDENCE—UNBIBLICAL

### B. THE 'WISE' MAN—MIND PROBLEM—MISUNDERSTANDS SPIRITUAL THINGS

1. Greeks—Gentiles—wanted **reasonable** answers—according to human wisdom
2. Christ's death was 'foolishness'—**moronic** = **μωρία**
3. Worldly 'wise' persons—'natural man'—cannot discern 'spiritual' things

**I Cor 2:12-14**—*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*

4. Their standards are based on—power—wealth—influence—affluence—success
5. '**Counter-intuitive**' truth
  - ❖ **Boiling water** freezes faster than room-temperature water
  - ❖ **Spend money** to make money
  - ❖ **Higher cancer rates** indicate healthier society—people live long enough to develop cancer
  - ❖ **Regular exercise** boosts your energy level
  - ❖ **Blunt objects** re-enter space more safely than streamlined ones
  - ❖ **Water vapor** is lighter than air
  - ❖ **Ask a busy** if you want to get something done
  - ❖ **We drive on parkways** and park on driveways
  - ❖ **The harder you try to think** the harder it is to remember!
  - ❖ **Green bus** illustration—in Birmingham UK
6. The foolishness of Christ's message—it impracticality—is counter-intuitive
  - o It is better to give than to receive
  - o Whoever wants to be great must be a servant

- o Whoever wants to be first must be last
- o How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God
- o I have not come to bring peace—My peace I give unto you—not as the world gives!
- o My kingdom is not of this world

*Jn 12:24—I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.*

7. Christ's represents weakness and defeat

- o He humbled Himself—instead of asserting His power as a great ruler
- o A god would not *die*—especially for humans!?

8. Modern equivalents—the 'wisdom' of this world

- o Philosophers—demand rational answers
- o Scientists—demand empirical evidence
- o Humanists—say man not God is the measure of all things
- o Political correctness—demands conformity to societal norms
- o Pragmatists—say only success in this world matters
- o Hedonists and materialists—say pleasure and things are all that matters

**C. THE 'SCRIBE'—VISION PROBLEM—DOES NOT WALK BY FAITH**

1. Jews wanted **evidence**—supernatural **signs** Scripture was being fulfilled
2. Jesus chastised them for desiring a 'sign'
  - a. **Mk 7**—why does this generation ask for a sign?—no sign will be given to it!
  - b. **Mt 16**— **red sky**—ridiculed their inability to *read* signs of times
  - c. **Mt 12**—rebuked them for seeking signs—they would have only the 'sign of Jonah'
    - His *death* would be a sign!
    - *So will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*
3. They ignored the obvious—His many powerful miracles were clear 'signs'
4. Christ was a 'stumbling-block'—'scandal' = **σκανδαλον**
  - a. Definition = a rock that causes one to trip
  - b. Two causes for tripping
    - o Focus on **works** instead of faith

- o **Disbelief** and **disobedience**
- c. Christ = ‘rock of offence’—for those lacking faith
  1. Jews tripped over Him because they **worked** for righteousness
  2. Only those who walk by **faith** will not trip over it!

**Rom 9:31-33**—*Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”*

- d. Christ = ‘stone of stumbling’—for the disbelieving and disobedient

**I Pe 2:7-8**—*for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very cornerstone,” and ‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense;’ for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.*

5. The real ‘scandal’ for the Jew
  - o That God would become Man!
  - o That He could be killed as a criminal
  - o That they could not earn salvation by works
  - o That they were not obedient to God’s word—but to human tradition
6. Modern equivalent = religious systems built on human works and legal codes

## V. CHRIST’S DEATH WAS NECESSARY

### A. DEMONSTRATED GOD’S POWER AND WISDOM

1. CHRIST PERFECTLY EMOPIES GOD’S POWER AND WISDOM

**I Cor 1:24**—*Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*

2. GOD’S WISDOM AND POWER—UNLIKE HUMAN WISDOM AND POWER

- a. God’s **wisdom**—defies human thinking—and grants pardon—[even when men don’t!]

1. See how God’s wisdom is different

**Is 55:8-9**—*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares 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.*

2. This difference—is the basis for Isaiah’s *previous* promise

**Is 55:6-7**—*Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him . . . for He will abundantly pardon.*

- b. God's **power**—is revealed in weakness

*II Cor 12:9—And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.*

### 3. GOD'S WISDOM AND POWER REVEAL—CHRIST'S DEATH WAS NECESSARY!

## B. WHY CHRIST'S DEATH WAS NECESSARY

### 1. TO **VANQUISH** DEATH

*Heb 2:14—Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*

- a. His victory is not theoretical—but real—and dynamic
- b. Death could not be defeated without being confronted
- c. Jesus died—and confronted death—and defeated it!
  - 1. By **descending**—and storming the very gates of Hell—**I Pe 3:19**
  - 2. By **overpowering** death and Satan—victoriously—in the resurrection
  - 3. By **abolishing** death and securing immortality

*II Tim 1:10—[the power of God has been revealed . . .] by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*

### 2. TO **ATONE** FOR OUR SINS

- a. He died as our **sacrifice**
  - o **Eph 5:2**—*walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.*
- b. This sacrifice **paid for our sins**
  - o **I Pe 3:18**—*For Christ also died for sins once for all the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.*

### 3. TO **RECONCILE** US TO THE FATHER—AND SAVE US

- **Rom 5:10**—*For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

### 4. TO **DEMONSTRATE** GOD'S LOVE

- **Rom 5:10**—*But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

5. TO **ASSURE** US OF FINAL VICTORY

- **Rom 8:31-32, 38-39**—*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? . . . For I am convinced that . . . [nothing, not even death] . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**C. HOW I KNOW THE SON OF GOD DIED FOR ME**

1. HIS DEATH ON A CROSS MAKES SENSE ONLY TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED!
2. ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW CHRIST—WHO IS THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

**I Cor 1:18**—*For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

**VII. INVITATION**

**LORD I WANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN**

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.