

What It Means To Be a Christian
Selected Scripture

1. What is Saving Faith?

- What does it mean to be a Christian?
 - Is it enough to just believe?
 - The gospel of John uses the word “believe” repeatedly
 - **Acts 16:31**, “... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
 - Sola fide – by faith alone
 - Solus Christus – by Christ alone
 - Do we see Jesus as Savior only? Or also as Lord?
 - What about our works? Our reward?
- What is saving faith?
 - Believe in believing: is a strong faith enough? – subjective
 - Faith is a gift of God’s grace – objective
 - **Eph. 2:8-9**, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
 - **Eph. 2:10**, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
- We manifest faith in many different ways:
 - Coffee in a cup, water in pipes – act in faith that these are safe
 - We trust the ignition in our car, causing little explosions
 - Doctor cuts you open – this is an act of faith
 - We do these things because of experience and trust (e.g. in a surgeon)
- This is not true of our salvation – we put our trust in Jesus Christ
 - Depends on trust in God, who is unseen and loved
 - We believe Scripture – a step into the unknown
 - We trust in Jesus Christ as our Redeemer/Savior
 - Our trust is in our eternal destiny
 - Faith is a gift of God – we have no experience to base this on
- The essence of saving faith – I believe
 - Faith is attached to something (in what), someone (in whom)
 - It is objective
 - The fundamental confession of a Christian
 - A foundational reality of Christianity
 - A core truth, a distinguishing reality of the Christian doctrine
 - **Rom. 1:1**, “Paul, a bondservant (*doulos/slave*) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.”
 - Paul, unashamedly admits to being a slave of Christ
 - **Rom. 1:16**, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
 - Continuously believing – trust, rely on, have faith in
 - True faith will demonstrate itself in action

- True faith is not a single event, but a way of life – it endures
- What about those who profess to believe in Christ but ...
 - ... show no fruit
 - ... walk away from the faith
 - We all know someone like that
 - Are they saved?
 - **1 John 2:19**, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but [they went out] that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”
 - The evidence in your salvation is not in your profession but in your behavior
 - **2 Cor. 13:5**, “Examine yourselves [as to] whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? ... “
 - Paul, after teaching the Corinthians (+ others) for 2 years, exhorts believers to examine themselves whether they are in the faith
- What we know about salvation:
 - Once saved, always saved – eternal life
 - **Rom. 8:38-39**, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - God chose the those converted to Christ before the foundation of the world
 - The chosen He justified
 - The justified He glorified, **Rom. 8:30**
 - No true believer would lose their salvation
- Is the gospel message as simple as – believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ask Him to forgive your sins and you’re a Christian?
- To understand what it means to be a Christian we will examine three concepts and explain why each one is important in the life of a Christian:
 1. **Jesus is Lord**
 2. **Christians as Slaves**
 3. **Our Reward**

2. Jesus is Lord

- Jesus delivers the Sermon on the mount in **Matt. 5-7**
 - The gospel given in these chapters ends with the following discourse
 - You may think you know the way to heaven
 - All the false religions of this world are those of human achievement in which you supposedly gain heaven by your good works
 - Your righteousness can’t exceed that of the Pharisees (works based)
 - You cannot be perfect like your heavenly Father is perfect (grace required)
 - In the true religion salvation is a gift of God’s grace
 - Here’s what you need to know about salvation
 - You don’t want to be deluded or deceived about salvation
 - Many people think they are Christians – but they’re not

- The narrow way into God's kingdom:
 - **Matt. 7:13-14**, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide [is] the gate and broad [is] the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow [is] the gate and difficult [is] the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."
 - The narrow way is that of divine accomplishment
 - The broad way is that of human achievement
- By their fruits you will know them:
 - **Matt. 7:15-20**, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor [can] a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."
 - The way is narrow because of many deceptive and false teachers, often by appearing to be true shepherds
 - They teach the prosperity gospel – ask and you will receive
 - They teach the gospel of self-esteem – you must feel good about yourself
 - They market the gospel to seekers – but don't disciple
 - They market the purpose-driven gospel – but don't disciple
 - They preach God's goodness – but not His wrath
 - They preach on heaven – but not on hell
- The true way into God's kingdom:
 - **Matt. 7:21-23**, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"
 - They call Him Lord but did not obey Him
 - They claim to have done good works and put their confidence in them
 - The true way is doing the will of "My Father"
- Hearing and doing His Word:
 - **Matt. 7:24-27**, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."
 - The house (life) built on a foundation of obedience to God stands
 - This calls for repentance and acceptance of His free gift of God's grace
 - Jesus is **curios** (Lord) and asks you to be His **doulos** (slave)

- In the recent campaign for President in the USA, John McCain responded to a question by Rick Warren – what does it mean to be a Christian?
 - He said “I am a Christian – this means that my sins are forgiven”
 - Yes, our sins are forgiven – but this is not the confession of a Christian
 - The correct answer is “Jesus is [my] Lord”
 - This is the core confession of a Christian
- This is a theological confession
 - **Rom. 10:9-10**, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - Salvation belongs to those who confess Jesus as Lord and believe in the resurrection (of Jesus)
 - This is a deep personal conviction
 - It includes repenting from sin, trusting in Jesus for salvation, and submitting to Him as Lord
 - Jesus is Savior and Lord
 - There is no salvation without the resurrection, **1 Cor. 15:14-17**, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching [is] empty and your faith [is] also empty. ... ”
- **1 Cor. 12:3**, “ ... no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”
 - A person is regenerated by the Holy Spirit
 - This is a common Christian confession
- Jesus Christ is our personal Savior
 - Does not mean that He is our servant, e.g. personal aide
 - Not like our personal computer
 - Jesus does not jump to our personal desires
 - Jesus is “personal” to us, but He is also “personal” to Satan
 - Jesus Christ is Lord – this is not ambiguous
- **1 Cor. 1:18**, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
 - This is not a natural faith
 - Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God
- **1 Cor. 1:23**, “but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,”
 - A stumbling block to the Jews – nation of Israel, priests rejected it
 - It is foolishness to the Gentiles – requires supernatural faith
 - Jesus Christ, a Jew, human, became man, died on the cross
 - Even a Roman could not be executed
 - Hanging head of one bowing down
 - A hard concept to accept for both the Jews and the Gentiles
 - A deity becoming human was a foreign concept
 - Nothing compelling to Jew or Gentile
 - They rejected the cross, Christ, and the Resurrection
 - Belief requires Holy Spirit’s saving power

- **1 Cor. 1:27**, “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;”
 - God has chosen them
 - Believers are humble
- **1 Cor. 1:30**, “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom of God – and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”
 - It is by His doing that you are in Christ Jesus
 - All a gift of God – salvation, righteousness
 - To confess is impossible to understand naturally
 - Salvation comes to those who confess Him as Lord
- The meaning of “Jesus is Lord”
 - Sovereign master, absolutely in charge
 - **John 13:13**. “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.”
 - Confirms Jesus as Lord
 - **John 15:14-15**, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants (*slaves*), for a servant (*slave*) does not know what his master is doing.”
 - Affirms the requirement to obey
 - “Why do you call me Lord and not obey?”, **Luke 6:46**
 - Is this friendship? Sounds like dictatorship
 - A friend knows what his master is doing, a slave does not
 - A slave does what his Lord commands
 - Jesus as Lord; believer as slave (servant)
 - Christian first called this name by unbelievers in Antioch
 - This is like Caesaroni, followers of Caesar
 - Counselors/slaves of Caesar
 - Friends with inside information
 - Slaves elevated to friends
- Metaphors calling an aspect of the believer
 - Could be called Citizens of the Kingdom, sheep, branches on the vine, a son, sons of God, children of God
 - But the predominant paradigm is “we are slaves”
- The Greek word *Curios* (Lord)
 - Used 747 in the NT
 - Implies absolute power, ownership, right to command
 - Opposite of the implication that Jesus Christ is a personal assistant, here to fulfill our desires and requests
 - In the book of Acts:
 - Jesus is called Savior 2 times
 - He is called Lord 92 times
 - **Jude 4**, “For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - We are often told “Decide what you want and ask Jesus for it”
 - This is not Christian, it is not our desire; we are to count the cost

- There is a cost of discipleship
 - **Luke 14:25-28**, “Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, ... ’”
 - We are to put Christ first, to deny ourselves, and to count the cost
- The early church went out to evangelize Jews and Gentiles
 - Crucified Jew is God (2nd person in the Trinity), executed in Jerusalem
 - He (God) rose from the grave
 - He is our only hope of salvation
 - A crucified man asks you to become His slave – really?
 - This is not a natural confession
 - **1 Cor. 12:3**, “ ... and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”
 - **Luke 6:46**, “But why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and not do the things which I say?”
 - Calling Jesus Lord implies obedience to His commandments
- How do we evangelize the lost?
 - Give up all, deny ourselves, and follow Jesus our Lord?
 - May mean losing everything, family, including one’s life
- Axiomatic (self-evident) Christian Truth
 - Jesus Christ is Lord, we are slaves
 - *Curios* (Lord) – no one is Lord over no one
 - *Doulos* (slave) – no one is slave of no one
 - *Curios* and *Doulos* are inseparable words
 - A Lord/master requires a slave and a slave requires a Lord/master
 - We need to understand both words – *Curios* and *Doulos*
 - Jesus is Lord – fundamental confession of the Christian faith, and a work of the Holy Spirit, **1 Cor. 12:3**
 - Let’s look at the word *Doulos* (slave)

3. Christians As Slaves

- The Greek word *Doulos* (always literally) means slave
- Biblically commonly translated as bondservant or servant
- Slavery was abolished
 - In the UK by Wilberforce in 1833
 - In the US by Lincoln in 1865
 - Slavery has a stigma attached to it (looked down on)
 - No one wants to be a slave today
- In the Roman empire
 - 20% of Romans (12 million) were slaves
 - Result of conquest, captives brought back to Rome
 - Owned and served as slaves, had no rights

- Children of slaves were slaves, born into slavery
- Slaves considered tool or animal (could even be maimed by master)
- Slaves had no rights
- Not every slave owner mistreated slaves
- NT speaks against mistreating slaves
- NT acknowledges slavery but does not condemn or condone it
- Being a slave was considered the worst status to be in
 - Free men denigrated slaves
 - A hard sell to be a slave
 - A free man does not want to be a slave
 - Not a winsome message – impossible
- Christians are referred to as slaves (*doulos*)
 - 130 times as a noun plus 20 other times in the NT
 - Always means slave, never servant
 - There are six different Greek words for servant
- Greek lexicon explains meaning of Greek words
 - *Doulos* always means slave
 - To be bought, owned, no rights, no freedom, provided for
 - Dominant metaphor for a Christian
- *Doulos* is translated as “(bond)servant” in most English translations of the Bible
 - Only 2 of about 25 translations of NT translate *doulos* as slave
 - The word slave carries too much of a negative stigma
 - Slavery had a bad reputation
 - Therefore *doulos* translated as servant or bondservant instead of slave
 - Servant means free, hired to do a job, can leave afterwards
 - These translations started with the Geneva Bible in 15th century
 - Obscures the meaning of the text; the word “servant” had different meaning
- **Matt. 6:24**, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - No slave can be owned by two masters
 - A servant could work for two masters at different times
- **Luke 9:23**, “Then He said to [them] all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’”
 - Count the cost and follow the Lord
 - Not many could follow or buy this message
- **Luke 13:23-24**, ‘Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”’
 - Not many being saved
 - Can’t get past their pride
- The Jews understood slavery
 - The word “slave” used in the OT as noun 800 times, as verb 300 times
 - Translated as “servant” in KJV since “slave” had a negative stigma
 - The concept of slave is obscured by use of “(bond)servant” in the translation
 - Dominant paradigm in the NT is that of Lord and slave

- e.g. for the rich young ruler the price was too high
- Put your trust in Jesus Christ
 - What is saving faith?
 - I confess Jesus Christ as Lord
 - His life, death, and resurrection affirm Him as Lord
 - We submit to Him as Lord, as an obedient slave
- **John 15:14**, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”
 - Slave does not know what the master is doing
 - A slave does not need to know the “big picture”, just obey
 - A friend knows what and why
- **John 15:15**, “No longer do I call you servants [*slaves*], for a servant [*slave*] does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”
 - A believer is more than a slave – a friend
- **1 Cor. 2:16**, “For ‘who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”
 - Believers are intimate, private friends – will sit on His throne
 - A slave at the highest level – intimate slave
 - Friend, son, adopted into family, joint heir, rule with Him
 - Joint heir of everything that belongs to Christ
 - This is what the gospel requires of you
 - Confess Jesus as Lord
- The concept of “slave” is well explained by Paul in **Rom. Ch. 6**
- **Rom 6:15-23**, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin [leading] to death, or of obedience [leading] to righteousness? But God be thanked that [though] you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human [terms] because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members [as] slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness [leading] to [more] lawlessness, so now present your members [as] slaves [of] righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things [is] death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - From slaves of sin to slaves of God
 - The word “slave” is used 8 times in this portion of Scripture
 - You were once a slave to sin
 - Resulting in uncleanness, lawlessness – leading to death
 - You are now a slave to God
 - Resulting in righteousness, holiness – leading to eternal life
 - **v. 15** – salvation by God’s grace is not a license to sin

- **v. 16** – it is an axiom of truth that as a slave of obedience that you are a slave of the one you obey – either of sin (leading to uncleanness and death) or of obedience (leading to righteousness and eternal life)
 - Slaves are bound to total obedience to their master
 - Those mastered by sin are under the lordship of Satan
 - Those mastered by righteousness are under the lordship of Christ
 - No one can serve two masters, **Matt. 6:24**
- Christians were once enslaved to sin
- Now enslaved to righteousness through their trust in Christ
- Believers should live in total subjection to Christ
 - A new relationship with God
 - No longer a slave of sin
- Christians should walk the talk, i.e. “practice what they preach”
- Christians still sin, but are no longer bound by sin
- We become enslaved to God and His righteousness
- We have the freedom to do as He pleases, not as we please
- **v. 22**, “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”
 - The benefit of being a slave of God is sanctification (holiness)
 - The outcome is eternal life
- Christ is the only way from sin to righteousness, from damnation to salvation, from eternal death to eternal life
- Lord/Slave relationship
 - Doulos 130 times as noun, 20 times as verb in the NT
 - Most translations used “servant” rather than “slave”
 - Servant has a different relationship with master than slave
 - Servant is free, not owned, has rights, but may have same duties as slave
 - Slave is **(1) chosen** out of marketplace, captive to owner, put up for sale
 - God chooses us – election/predestination
 - This doctrine fits in with the meaning of what a slave is
- **Rom. 6:6-7**, “ ... that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.”
 - We were slaves of sin
 - Slave chosen by God (election), God frees us
 - Divine, sovereign
 - All doctrine related to salvation fits in
 - He pays for them, **(2) bought**, price was paid
 - We were redeemed
- **Acts 20:28**, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
 - Purchased the church
- **1 Pet. 1:18-19**, “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, [like] silver or gold, from your aimless conduct [received] by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

- Bought and paid for, redeemed
- **Rev. 5:9**, “ ... And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”
 - Purchased possession of God
- **Rom. 14:7-8**, “For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.”
 - No one lives for himself
 - Deny yourself, you are not in charge
 - We are the Lord’s
 - **James 4:15** tells us “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”
- **Rom. 8:14**, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”
 - We are the Lord’s; we live to Him; we die to Him; He is sovereign
- Slavery is distasteful to us
 - In the OT slaves were slaves for life
 - They had their ears pierced willingly
- Slaves are **(1) chosen, (2) bought, (3) owned, (4) submissive, (5) obedient, (6) dependent** [on master], **(7) disciplined**, and **(8) rewarded** also
 - Highest ambition – to be slaves to master
 - No thought to what we eat or drink or where we would go
 - Everything provided for
- **Phil. 4:11-13**, “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do [face] all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
 - We are disciplined as slaves or as sons
- **Phil. 4:19**, “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”
 - The Lord supplies all our needs
- We will be rewarded at the Bema seat
 - Called to account - accountable to the Lord
 - Well done good and faithful servant
- Gospel is all about being slaves to the Master
 - **Matt. 10:24**, “A disciple is not above [his] teacher, nor a servant [*slave*] above his master.”
 - A slave is not above his master
 - A slave is given freedoms, as determined by the master
 - Free to roam within garden provided by God
 - Obedience – friend and slave
- The notion of a slave
 - Kills prosperity gospel message – you are in charge of your health and wealth
 - Kills church growth movements – find out what people want
 - Kills promise to get what we desire and ask for
 - Kills the “self-esteem” gospel message
 - These messages obscure the concept of a slave – one who gives up everything

- **Luke 9:57-62**, “ ... someone said to Him, ‘Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air [have] nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay [His] head.’ Then He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.’ And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go [and] bid them farewell who are at my house.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’”
 - This is what it means to follow Jesus
 - Foxes have holes, birds have nests
 - You have no home, bed, success
 - Following Jesus leads to sacrifice
 - “Permit me to bury my father” – not dead yet, but waiting for inheritance
 - Go home first to bid farewell
 - Put your hand to plow and don’t look back
- Follow Jesus whatever the cost
 - Sanctification is lost in the church
 - Holiness, godliness, purity, virtue – are lacking
 - The reality of biblical obedience is missing
 - Message of prosperity and health – want Jesus to give them what they desire
 - The cross is foolishness
 - Obedience has disappeared
 - An unsanctified church
 - Slavery is negative – obscuring it does not help
- Only the Lord can produce this kind of faith
 - True faith confesses Jesus as Lord
 - We boast in what the Lord has done
- **Acts 2:17-18**, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.”
 - Peter’s preaching at Pentecost (quoting from Joel)
 - **v.17** – pour out My spirit on all flesh
 - **v.18** – even My slaves will prophesy
- **Acts 16:17**, “These men are the slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim ... “
 - Spoken by a demon-possessed girl
- **Col. 4:12** , “Epaphras, who is [one] of you, a bondservant [*slave*] of Christ, greets you, ... “
- **2 Tim. 2:24**, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,”
 - A preacher is a slave
- **1 Pet. 2:16**, “as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants [*slaves*] of God.”
 - Slaves of God with the freedom to do what is right, not as an excuse for sin

- **Rev. 1:1**, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,”
 - Revelation of Jesus Christ to His slaves
 - John identifies himself as a slave
- **Rev. 7:3**, “saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’”
 - 144,000 to be protected, sealed slaves
 - All believers are slaves
- **Rev. 10:7**, “but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.”
 - Mystery of God as He preached to His slaves
 - Concept of slave used throughout
- **Rev. 19:2**, “For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.”
 - Avenged blood of His slaves
- **Rev. 19:5**, “Then a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!’”
 - All who fear Him (all are slaves)
- **Rev. 22:3**, “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”
 - No longer any curse
 - Even in heaven, slaves will serve Him
- **Rev. 22:6**, “Then he said to me, ‘These words [are] faithful and true.’ And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.”
 - Angels to show His slaves
- The Apostles identify themselves as slaves without reluctance
 - **Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1; Rev. 1:1**
- **Phil. 2:3**, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”
 - Taking the posture of a slave
 - Humble, humility, selfless (also in Jesus Christ)
 - Do nothing from selfishness
- **Phil. 2:4**, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”
 - Look out for interest of others
- **Phil. 2:7**, “but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, [and] coming in the likeness of men.”
 - Emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave
 - Jesus Christ is the perfect model and illustration of a slave
- **John 4:34**, “Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”
 - Son can do nothing of Himself

- Become obedient even to the point of death
- Perfect obedience to the Father
- This is the testimony of John in the gospel of John
- **John 5:19**, “Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’”
 - The Son does the will of His Father
- **John 10:37**, “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;”
 - If Jesus did not do the work of My Father, He would not be believable
 - Jesus is the model slave – He does what His Father wills
- Confess Jesus as Lord and self as slave
 - Obedient, not just slaves, but slave and son
 - The world needs to see the church as true slaves to Christ
 - False Christians with a false gospel are confusing the world
 - We are to be holy and sanctified and exhibit godliness to impact the world

4. Our Reward

- Two kinds of inheritance:
 1. By birth
 2. From the Lord
- Inheritance by birth:
 - Belongs to us because we are sons of God and heirs
 - Because we are “born again”
 - **Gal. 4:6-7**, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”
 - Unconditional and automatic “sonship” inheritance (e.g. like a will)
 - A free gift – no works required
 - Guarantees us “eternal life”
 - Open to all who will accept it
 - **Eph. 1:11,14**, “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ... who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”
- Inheritance from the Lord:
 - Given by the Lord because of faithfulness, obedience and perseverance
 - Conditional because there are requirements
 - **Rom. 14:9-12**, “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ... So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”
 - We will stand before the bema (judgment) seat of Christ
 - Reward contingent on quality of our Christian life
 - Rewards are earned; they are not a gift
- **2 Cor. 5:8-10**, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the

- judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things [done] in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”
- We receive our eternal rewards at the judgment seat of Christ
 - The bema seat (elevated platform) is where athletes receive their crowns
 - Sins are not judged here – they have been paid for on the cross
 - We are encouraged to spend our time and energy with things of eternal value
 - **Titus 2:9**, “[Exhort] bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all [things], not answering back,”
 - Slaves are to be obedient and well pleasing to their masters
 - The term “well pleasing” is the same as the one used in **2 Cor. 5:9**
 - **1 Cor. 3:13-15**, “each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on [it] endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”
 - Only things done for His glory will endure
 - We can not lose our salvation, but we can forfeit rewards
 - **Phil. 2:9-11**, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - Jesus is highly exalted – given a name above every name
 - We are exalted as joint heirs
 - Every knee bow, every one confess that Jesus is Lord
 - Illustration of path to the throne
 - We are to be sons, we are to obey – the path to freedom
 - **Luke 17:7**, “And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?' But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?' Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'”
 - This is how slaves are viewed
 - Shepherd comes in to eat to be served
 - Master does not thank the slave since he did what was expected of him
 - Slave did what he ought to have done
 - Well done good and faithful slave
 - I only did what I ought to have done
 - Jesus welcomes into our Kingdom
 - He sets the table for us and serves us (but not as our slave)
 - **Matt. 28:19-20**, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; ... ”

- Teaching them to do all that they were commanded to do
- Back to where we started
 - Confess Jesus as Lord
 - Do as you were commanded to do
 - This is the gospel message
 - We are to deny ourselves – this is not natural
 - We cannot say that Jesus is Lord except through the Holy Spirit, i.e. supernaturally, **1 Cor. 12:3**
- Jesus Christ is Lord – the Son inherits everything
- We are slaves – chosen, bought for a price, redeemed, owned
- We are exalted as joint heirs
- We are delivered from damnation and hell
- There is joy in heaven
- We are given the incorruptible crown and the crowns of rejoicing, life, righteousness, and glory
- Our reward – well done good and faithful servant/slave