

The Greatness of Christ

*(Luk 1:26) And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27) To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 **He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.***

Gabriel had been chosen and sent from God unto Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a virgin named Mary, who was espoused to Joseph, to let her know that she would conceive and give birth, not to an ordinary child, but to the Son of the Highest. She was to call his name JESUS. **“He”**, declared the angel, **“shall be great.”**

Great (Webster Dict):

1. A term of comparison, denoting more magnitude or extension than something else, or beyond what is usual;
2. Expressing a large, extensive or unusual degree of any thing; as great fear; great love; great strength; great wealth; great power; great influence; great folly.
3. Chief; of vast power and excellence; supreme; illustrious; as the great God; the great Creator.
4. Vast; extensive; wonderful; admirable.
5. Possessing large or strong powers of mind; as a great genius.
6. Having made extensive or unusual acquisitions of science or knowledge; as a great philosopher or botanist; a great scholar.
7. Distinguished by rank, office or power; elevated; eminent; as a great lord; the great men of the nation; the great Mogul; Alexander the great.
8. Dignified in aspect, mien or manner.
9. Magnanimous; generous; of elevated sentiments; high-minded. He has a great soul.
10. Rich; sumptuous; magnificent, vast; sublime; dignified; noble.
11. Distinguished by extraordinary events, or unusual importance.

12. Superior; preeminent.

- The sense of great is to be understood by the things it is intended to qualify. Great pain or wrath is violent pain or wrath; great love is ardent love; great peace is entire peace; a great name is extensive renown; a great evil or sin, is a sin of deep malignity, &c.
- Time would prove that this only begotten Son of God would even be more renowned than the angels; indeed, why else would they have been commanded by God to worship the baby born to Mary.

The Bible declares concerning Christ in Colossians:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

He, through whom time was made, was made in time; and He, older by eternity than the world itself, was younger in age than many of His servants in the world; He, who made man, was made man; He was given existence by a mother whom He brought into existence; He was carried in hands which He formed; He nursed at breasts which He filled; He cried like a babe in the manger in speechless infancy -- this Word without which human eloquence is speechless!

-- Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon on Christmas*

- The greatness of that holy one born in a lowly manger is without parallel. He is, indeed, incomparable!

A French philosopher named Renan once wrote a book entitled "The Life of Jesus". His book concludes with these words: "*JESUS is in every respect unique, & nothing can be compared with him. Whatever may be the unexpected phenomena of the future, Jesus will not be surpassed. His worship will constantly renew its youth, the tale of his life will cause ceaseless tears, his sufferings will soften the best hearts; all the ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born who is greater than Jesus.*"

- I want to **present** him in his greatness, that you might **see** him in his greatness, because I want you to **know** him in his greatness and **experience** his greatness in a very personal way.
- I speak of one who was born contrary to the laws of life. This Man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He did not travel extensively. Only once did He cross the boundary of the country in which He lived; that was during His exile in childhood.
- He possessed neither wealth nor influence. His relatives were inconspicuous and had neither training nor formal education.
- In infancy, He startled a king; in childhood He puzzled doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked upon the waves as pavement, and hushed the sea to sleep.
- He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His service.
- He never wrote a book, and yet perhaps all the libraries of the world could not hold the books that have been written about Him.
- He never wrote a song, and yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all the songwriters combined.
- He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students.
- He never marshaled an army, nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun; and yet no leader ever had more volunteers who have, under His orders, made more rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot fired.
- He never practiced psychiatry, and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near.
- Once each week multitudes congregate at worshiping assemblies to pay homage and respect to Him.
- The names of the past, proud statesmen of Greece and Rome have come and gone. The names of the past scientists, philosophers, and theologians have walked the pages of history and had their day in the sun. But the name of this Man keeps increasing in recognition and fame. Though time has spread 2,000 years between the people of this generation and the mockers at His crucifixion, He still lives. His enemies could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.

- He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as the risen, personal Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Billy Sunday, the professional baseball player who became a renowned evangelist in the early 1900's expressed his views of Jesus in these words: *"To many, JESUS is only a grand subject for a painting, a heroic theme for a pen, a beautiful form for a statue, & a thought for a song; but to those who have felt his presence, who have received his pardon, he is music, warmth, light, joy, hope, & salvation. He is a friend who never forsakes, a comforter in time of sorrow, a refuge in time of storm. We cannot wear him out; we pile on him all our grief & troubles, yet he is always there - always ready to lift us, addressing us with the same love; beaming on us with the same smile; pitying us with the same compassion."*

- Jesus' forefather, David, had been a king who was loved and renowned by all of Israel. King David reigned a long time, but his 40 year term in office pales in significance to the length of time this newborn king of the Jews would reign. Gabriel told Mary that the son she had been highly favored to bear would sit upon the throne of David. *"And"*, he informed the young virgin girl, *"he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; & of HIS kingdom there shall be no end."*

Seven or eight hundred years earlier, a prophet of the Lord named Isaiah, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, peered down the long telescope of time, saw the supernatural conception & birth of Christ Jesus & declared, *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 for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

- Near the end of the days of his flesh, as that promised Messiah Son stood on trial before Pontius Pilate, Pilate asked him, "From whence art thou?" Jesus replied, *"My kingdom is not of this world."*
- He had come from a heavenly kingdom to set up a kingdom on earth that would never be destroyed. Not only that, but, as it was prophesied in the writings of Daniel, it would break in pieces & consume all other kingdoms.

- I'm preaching about the Lord from glory, who is the King of kings. He reigns in majesty today, & He shall reign forever & ever!

Oh what is Jesus, the Christ to thee?
 My Lord, God and Saviour, Immanuel, He;
 My Prophet, Priest, Sacrifice, Altar and Lamb;
 Judge, Advocate, Surety and Witness, I AM;
 My Peace and my Life, my Truth and my Way;
 My Leader, my Teacher, my Hope and my Stay;
 Redeemer and Ransom, Atonement and Friend;
 He's Alpha, Omega, Beginning and End.

Yea, more is Jesus, the Christ beside---
 Avenger and Shepherd, and Keeper and Guide;
 My Horn of Salvation, my Captain in war,
 My Dayspring, my Sun, and my Bright Morning Star;
 My Wonderful, Counselor, Wisdom and Light;
 My Shadow by day, and my Beacon by night;
 Pearl, Ornament, Diadem, Treasure untold;
 My Strength and my Sun, in Him I behold.

All this is Jesus, the Christ and more---
 My Bread and my Water, my Dwelling, my Door,
 My Branch and my Vine, my Lily and Rose;
 Rock, Hiding Place, Refuge, Shield, Covert, Repose;
 My sure Resurrection, my Glory above;
 My King in His beauty, my Bridegroom, my Love;
 My all and in all in Christ Jesus I see,
 For God hath made Him to be all things to me.

Now say to Thy soul, "What is He to thee?"

Jer 10:6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.

- There is no name as powerful & authoritative as the name of Jesus. It is more inspiring than Winston Churchill's, more musical than Beethoven's, and more patient than Abraham Lincoln's. The name of Jesus throbs with all life, weeps with all passion, groans with all pain, stoops with all love.
- History buffs marvel at the exploits of Peter the Great, of Russian fame, & at those of Alexander the Great, of Greece. Sports fans will recall the proud boasting of Mohammed Ali, the famed heavyweight boxer who

declared “**I am the greatest**”. These all met their match. All were eventually conquered & outdone or defeated by another man.

- Christ Jesus is greater than any man or god, whether in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth.

The Jews said unto Jesus, as is recorded in [John 8:53-58](#):

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Yes, He is greater than Abraham!

- Who can deny that Moses was a great & honorable man? Yet the Bible says of Christ Jesus, “*This man was **counted worthy of more glory than Moses**, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.*”
- JESUS paid high tribute to the prophet Jonah, saying that when he went to Nineveh & preached repentance, they humbled themselves.... “*And, behold*”, he said, “***a greater than Jonah is here.***”
- When John the Baptist was imprisoned & then beheaded for the gospels sake, JESUS eulogized him in glowing terms, saying that **among the sons of men there was none greater than John**. He was the greatest prophet of all.” Yet John saw himself differently. He said, “***He that cometh after me is preferred before me**, for he was before me. I indeed baptize you with water...*”

[Jn 3.31](#) says “*He that cometh from above is above all.*”

Why is Jesus credited with such greatness!

- What makes him so great & greatly to be praised!
- Why do demons tremble at the name of Jesus?
- What is behind the bold statement of Jesus to his followers, *"If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it?"*
- Why did Isaiah declare, *"his name shall be called Wonderful..."*
- How can it be that the Holy Ghost comes in Jesus' name?
- What gives that name so much authority that through believing on it we might have life?
- How is it that his name, through faith in his name, makes the lame walk & leap, opens blind eyes, looses dumb tongues, unstops deaf ears, & gives perfect soundness of body & mind?

The name of JESUS is great because the man, JESUS, is great.

True greatness is neither prophesied nor conferred upon anyone without just cause. A lot of people have been given the name of Jesus at their birth, yet none of them attained unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of this Jesus who is the Christ

Let me speak to you of the birth of Jesus Christ. According to **Matt 1:18-23**, it *was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 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.

Here, in two brief statements, is the essence of why the name Jesus is so great.

- 1) It is the revealed redemptive name of the Lord God himself; and,
- 2) It is the name of the only one ever born to save his people from their sins. JESUS literally means "The LORD is salvation".

- He was manifest in flesh to save us from our sins. He lived to save us from our sins. He suffered, bled & died to save us from our sins.

He rose from the dead to save us from our sins. He ascended on high & was glorified to save us from our sins.

- Jesus greatness was seen even during his childhood. He was especially great in wisdom. As a 12 yr old, he amazed the doctors of theology & other men of learning in the temple at Jerusalem. All that heard him were astonished at his understanding & answers. And Luke 2 tells us that he increased in wisdom as he matured!
- More than once the question was raised concerning him, *"Whence hath this man such wisdom, having never learned?"*
- Speaking to certain scribes & Pharisees on one occasion, Jesus said, *"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, & shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; &, behold, **a greater than Solomon is here.**"*
- Here was a man who had never studied astrophysics, genetics, or physiology, yet the mysteries of worlds he spoke into existence in the beginning continue to perplex, astound & confuse the greatest scientific minds of all times. He never learned anatomy or medicine, yet he straightened curved spines, cleansed lepers, stanching the flow of blood and caused fevered brows to return to normal temp.
- The amazing healing power of JESUS was demonstrated in his ministry. For example, when he met a man who had been blind from birth, JESUS spat on the ground & made a ball of mud, which he used to anoint the eyes of the blind man. "Go," he instructed him, *"Wash in the pool of Siloam."* He went his way & washed, & came back with his eyesight restored!
- Yes, He is great in wisdom & in power, yet many are sick & weakly because they fail to do what the Lord tells them. The healing of the blind man caused quite a stir in his city. The Jews, especially, did not believe his story. They told him, *"Give God the praise, for we know this man is a sinner."* He answered, *"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. **And since the world began, it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.**"*

- We all love to see the signs that follow them that believe, yet JESUS declared that for one to believe on him as the Son of God is a miracle unsurpassed by any in the natural realm.
- This Jesus, this incomparable Christ, is the Star of astronomy, the Rock of geology, as well as the Lion & Lamb of zoology.
- He is the revealer of the snares that lurk in darkness; the rebuker of every evil thing that prowls by night, the quickener of all that is wholesome, the adorer of all that is beautiful, the reconciler of all that is contradictory, the harmonizer of all discords, the healer of all diseases, & the saviour of all mankind.
- His greatness transcended physical laws. He walked on water as though it were a sea of glass; he spoke to dead people & they were restored to life. When he was slain, he raised himself on the third day. In defiance of the law of gravity, he ascended up into heaven with no aid except a cloud.

Ps 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, **thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.**

Ps 145:1-8

I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.

6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.

*7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of **thy great goodness**, and shall sing of thy righteousness.*

8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of **great mercy.**

The Holy Scripture of Truth ascribes greatness unto our God repeatedly.

In Gen, Christ is foreshadowed as the Shiloh, the ever-present one

In Ex., he appeared to Moses as the I am

In Nu, he is the rock that followed Israel in the wilderness

Lev portrays him as our high priest
Deut reveals Christ as the living manna
Jud shows him as the law-giver
In Josh, he's the captain of the Lord's host
Sam portrays him as the true prophet
Kings, the king over all
Nehemiah, the builder of broken walls & gates
Job, the redeemer
Psa, the anointed one
Eccl, the preacher
Isa, the prince of peace
Jer, the righteous branch
Eze, the Shepherd
Hosea, the healer of the backslider
Micah, the ruler whose goings forth have been from old, from
everlasting
Hag, the desire of all nations
Mal, the Sun of righteousness
In the four gospels, he is deity robed in humanity
In the Acts of the Apostles, he's the founder of the church
In the epistles, he is the head of the body
In Rev, he is the Alpha & the Omega, the beginning & the end, that
which is, & which was, & which is to come, the Almighty.

- The greatness of Christ is not attributed to him so much for his miracles, wisdom, healing and preaching as it is for a few particular aspects of his nature which made all these other things possible.
- I think it is safe to say that the main reason greatness was conferred on our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ is that he earned it. The writings of the prophet Isaiah, in chapter 53, testify to his excellencies. There it is evident that his greatness came by way of his humility, selflessness, suffering, burden bearing, sin bearing, and death.

Isa 53

1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- Calvary was necessary: sinless blood had to be shed so we could experience forgiveness of sins. But, thanks be to God, the gospel is not just the death & burial of Christ, for *“if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins... but now is CHRIST raised from the dead, & become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.”*
- Forty days after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus accomplished his exodus from earth. The New Testament underscores his wondrous ascension by mentioning it nearly 120 times. Jesus was not abandoning his followers: he was repositioning himself for a strategic purpose. He is now glorified & seated on the right hand of power in the heavens. As Eph 4 declares, *“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.”*

- The ascension of Jesus insured the descent of his holy Spirit. Sorrow filled the hearts of Jesus' disciples when he told them he was going to the Father. *"Nevertheless", he said, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."*
- His greatness can only be fully comprehended by those whom he saves from sin. I urge you not to neglect so great salvation! Jesus waits with desire to pour out his Spirit today upon all who come unto him and drink.

True greatness in man is a by-product of attitudes & actions that please God, not necessarily us. That's why we are admonished by these words in the epistle to the **Phillipians, chapter 2**

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

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

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

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

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

- As God works in you, convicting you of sin, & of righteousness, & of judgment, surrender to him. Acknowledge your guilt. See yourself as lost & undone. Then believe wholly on him, call on his great name, & he will save you from your sins.
- The Lord wants each one of us to be great, but not in the context of selfish ambition. He wants us to influence our world, not by a privileged position in his kingdom but by serving others. So it was that Jesus directed us toward the correct meaning of greatness.
- He testified to those who wanted to sit on his right hand and on his left that as we begin to share his cup of suffering, & his baptism of blood, it

will sanctify our ambitions, purify our motives, & conform our lives to the true concept of greatness.

- He wants us to make an impact on our world forever. Greatness has nothing to do with position or titles, possessions or fame. It has everything to do with meeting people's needs.
- Jesus' entire ministry of greatness was wrapped in the towel of a servant.
- The church, his body, is called to minister to a bruised & battered world. Why do we strive to become a great church? Not to make ourselves a name, nor to gain earthly fame, but to enable us to reach & serve the multitudes in our cities. Why do we push for higher attendance? Not just to see a larger number on the board, a plaque on the wall, or our name in the district paper, but because it reflects being able to minister to more people.
- Likewise, a more powerful preaching ministry is desirable, not for a pedestal to display our oratorical ability, but because we want to wrap ourselves in the gospel that is larger than us, & to influence more people to come under the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- We must become great so we can meet the needs of a desperate world of drug abusers, alcoholics, gambling addicts, sexual perverts, promiscuous young people. We want to bring healing to broken homes, fractured relationships & shattered dreams.
- Just as Jesus' earthly greatness was followed by his ascension and glorification, so also shall ours. In Acts 1 it is written that as his awestruck followers stared upward at their heaven-bound Lord, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from your into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.
- Jesus will be even greater in his re-appearing than he was in his first appearing!. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

- Like fragments of iron drawn by a mighty magnet, we shall take our flight to worlds unknown!
- Let's stand to our feet and rejoice together at the exceeding greatness of Christ toward us during this Christmas season! If his first coming was good tidings of great joy, how much more so shall be his second coming!