

ISSUE

18.33

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

August 14,
2016

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



“Jesus Christ Has Come in the Flesh”

by Kyle Pope

It is generally believed that the first epistle of John focused to some degree on the early stages of Gnostic belief. Gnosticism, in the first few centuries after Christ spread throughout the ancient world and challenged many early Christians. In their view Jesus could not have really come in the flesh because they felt that material things were inherently corrupt. To justify their own immoral behavior, Gnostics argued that since Jesus (in their view) spiritually came to earth without really having contact with the material, they could do what they wished with their bodies and by attaining secret knowledge (*gnosis* in Greek) they could still be pure inwardly. In refutation of this type of thinking John, through the Holy Spirit, declared that Jesus was One whom—“...we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled...” (1 John 1:1, NKJV). Further,

“every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (I John 4:3).

While our modern world may no longer have proponents of Gnosticism as it existed in the ancient world, there are still many who have their own reasons for

choosing to deny that **“Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.”** If He did certain conclusions are inescapable.

If Jesus has come in the flesh...

1. He is the way to eternal life. Jesus offers mankind the way of salvation but He declares that it is a **“narrow”** and **“difficult”** way (Matt. 7:14). Not all roads lead to heaven. Not everything done in the name of religion is profitable to us. While we might hope and strive and try to attain a relationship with God through some other religion, our imagination or our conscience, Jesus declared boldly—**“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”** (John 14:6).

2. His word must be followed. In offering man the way to salvation, Jesus set down a very exclusive standard of faith and behavior. We will not be judged according to some human philosophy or theory, but by Jesus’ words. Jesus taught—**“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48). Since Jesus came in the flesh the standard of truth is clearly set forth in His word.



3. We can't follow our own way. Jesus taught—“**If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me**” (Matt. 16:24). Jeremiah taught the same principle centuries before this—“**O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps**” (Jer. 10:23). Since Jesus came in the flesh and offered mankind the way that must be followed, in matters of personal lifestyle or in questions of religious practice the question is not what we want but what God (in Jesus) wants for us.

4. Sin can be avoided. Just as the Gnostics rationalized away the sinfulness of immorality, many today try to suggest that it is impossible for people to resist temptation and avoid sin. They do so either from some theological doctrine that claims we inherit a sinful nature or from a humanistic determinism that treats behavior as the result of genetics, instinct, or chemistry. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus possessed the same human nature we do. The Hebrew writer tells us that Jesus was made like us “**in all things**” and that He has partaken of our “**flesh and blood**” which is the very reason He can act as our “**Priest in things pertaining to God**” (2:14-17). Yet,

Jesus also was “**in all points tempted as we are yet without sin**” (Hebrews 4:15). While it is obvious that the flesh is often weak (see Matt. 26:41), to claim that the flesh cannot avoid sin we must reject Jesus' own coming in the flesh.

5. Many of our friends are lost.

The fact that Jesus came and offered to mankind a new way of salvation sets before us an offer we can either accept or reject. To reject Jesus is to forfeit the only hope that any of us have of salvation. Those who make such a choice will one day hear the sad words, “**I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness**” (Matt. 7:23).



The fact that Jesus actually did come in the flesh means that many in the world (including some of our own family and friends) will hear these sad words from the Lord.

6. We must face Him in judgment.

While on the earth Jesus declared that when the Day

of Judgment comes, He will sit as judge of the world. In his gospel, John relates Jesus' declaration—**“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”** (John 5:22). In teaching His disciples about final judgment Jesus told them at the end of things He will sit **“on the throne of His glory”** and all the nations will be gathered before Him so that he might separate them **“as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats”** (Matt. 25:31-32). If Jesus never came we would have no accountability to Him. His coming in the flesh means that we cannot escape our responsibility to Him and our appointment one day to stand before Him in judgment.



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We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**