



Sir,  
we wish  
to see

John 12:21

Jesus.

John and Jackie Matthews

## ***"Sir, we wish to see Jesus."***

Some Greeks had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. They came to Philip with a simple request. "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

Philip told it to Andrew, and they both passed on the request to Jesus Himself.

These people wanted to see Jesus.

They may have already heard about Him. They may have met someone whose life had been changed by Him. Perhaps they had only heard rumors of Him, or maybe they had actually heard Him speak. Regardless, their request was that they wanted to see Him personally. To meet Him, talk to Him, be introduced to Him.

When Jesus heard the request of the Greeks to see him, his response was unusual. He said, "... The truth is, a kernel of wheat must be planted

in the soil. Unless it dies it will be alone—a single seed. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who despise their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. All those who want to be my disciples must come and follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And if they follow me, the Father will honor them. (John 12:24-26)

He went on to speak of his death by crucifixion, saying “If I be lifted up, I will draw everyone to myself.” (v. 32)

All this in response to a simple request to meet Him.

Many people, of course, met Jesus every day as He walked and talked. Many saw Him. But only some REALLY knew who He was. Only a few REALLY came to know Him personally.

If anyone wanted to really know Him, they were left with a simple choice. "Come, leave everything, and follow Me"

James and John, Peter and Andrew had done just that. When they first met Jesus, they were tending to their fishing business. One morning Jesus came by the seashore and asked them if they were catching any fish.. He told them to cast their nets out into the deep for a catch. They replied that they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. "Nevertheless," they said, "at your command we will let down the nets." And they brought in a great haul of fish.

Peter was so overwhelmed that he told Jesus to depart from him, crying out, "I am a sinful man!" Peter and his friends had been confronted with the presence of Jesus, holy and powerful. All Jesus had to say was, "from

now on you'll be catching men." They immediately left their boats, their nets and their careers and followed Jesus. (Luke 5)

This Jesus whom Peter and Andrew met that morning, is still the same today. To be in His presence on that day was to be touched by the power of Heaven. To know Him, to see Him, and to be in His presence today has the same results, for Jesus is the same – yesterday, and today, and forever.

One day Jesus found Phillip, and said to him "follow Me." Philip did just that. Immediately he went and found his friend Nathaniel and said to him "We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote! Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph!"

Nathaniel said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (A city with a poor reputation.) Philip said "Come

and see.”

When Jesus saw Nathaniel coming he prophesied: “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit.” Nathaniel said to Jesus, “How do you know me?” Jesus spoke supernatural words to him. “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathaniel remembered the spot, and he knew that Jesus was not there and could not have known that he was standing under a fig tree.

That’s all it took. Nathaniel, quick to see with his spiritual eyes, quick to believe the truth, replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus then told him he would see much greater things, including seeing the heavens opened, and angels “ascending and descending on the Son of Man”! (John 1)

We need to see Jesus. We need to

have the eyes of our heart opened like Nathaniel to see Jesus in the same way.

### ***Be a good usher...***

The greatest ministry available to anyone is to introduce others to Jesus — to tell someone that we have “found the Messiah” and to “come and see!”

When teaching pastors and leaders, I often say: “The most important thing about ministry is learned by being a good usher”.

Ministers do not rise any higher than to become good ushers. If a preacher has learned to be a good usher, he will be a good minister.

There is a reason this needs to be said. Andrew and Philip exemplified this. They simply brought others to Jesus.

What is a good usher? An usher

meets a person at the entry to an event, a meeting, or a program. He welcomes that person, and points the way to the meeting hall. If he is a good usher, he will take the person into the meeting hall and help him find a good seat, with an unobstructed view of the platform.

One thing a good usher knows: he is not the star of the show. He is not the reason people came to the event.

Preachers of the gospel need to remember this. A good preacher is a good usher. He may think the people are there to hear him, but actually they are there for another reason, for another person. They are there to meet God.

The problem is that people are looking at the preacher and listening to him, so he can mistakenly think they are there for that purpose. And he can think that he is there to be the

“star of the show”. Not so.

His highest purpose is to be an usher. To usher people in to get a good view of the real star, Jesus Himself. To help them have an unobstructed view of Jesus. To help them get close to Him, and hear His voice and see His face. That is the preacher’s job. That is the pastor’s job. That is the worship leader’s job. That is the teacher’s job. That is the musician’s job. That is the Sunday school teacher’s job. To be a good usher.

To help people see, know and meet Jesus.

If there is another purpose to ministry, what is it?

As a young minister I did not understand this. I thought people wanted to listen to me and learn from me. As a result, I thought I had to be the expert and have all the answers.

I especially felt this tension in the counseling ministry.

As with all pastors, people came to me looking for help. They rarely brought small problems, because it usually takes a big problem for most people to go for help. So they would come into my office, sit down, and look to me for help. They unloaded their frustrations and complexities at my feet.

Slowly I learned not to take on those problems, and I learned that I did not have to have the answers to their problems. For their sake and mine, I developed a habit. After the person had expressed to me why he had come, and what his problem was, I would say, "I'm sorry, but I cannot help you."

I would wait for the look of surprise on their face, wait for their jaw to drop. Then I would say "But I know

someone who CAN help you. Let's bring this problem to Him."

We'd begin to pray. I'd call on the Lord for His presence, His power, and His wisdom to be with us in that room. Then I'd begin to lead the person to meet Jesus (saved or unsaved).

You see, after years I had come to know that the answer and solution to people's problems was the Lord Himself. His presence, His power, His word, His perspective.

In one minute I have seen God do what human wisdom could not do in a year.

We Americans are famous around the world for being the people that always know how to do things. (Or we think we know.) We are ready to tell the world how to do it. Just consider the number of seminars, conferences and workshops that have proliferated

in our generation – and in the church even more so.

It is good to teach people practical things. But I became aware of something in my teaching and in the preaching of ministers around me: we were teaching all kinds of good things from the Bible, and yet the name of Jesus was being heard less and less. It seemed to me we thought we had learned how to do things with or without His help! We were teaching people the “how to’s”, but were we preaching the gospel? Paul wrote, “we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord...” (2 Corinthians 4:5) I found myself on my knees repenting of “preaching myself”.

In the preaching ministry, the focus on Christ Himself is of paramount importance. Because there is always so much to teach, so many issues to deal with, so much information available at

our fingertips, it is possible to fill our pulpit time with something other than the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have heard respected ministers preach entire messages without one reference to Jesus.

It is good to preach on principles of success that we have experienced and learned well. However, if we only dispense our wisdom on life, we may no longer be preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We may have become preachers "of ourselves" – "Here's how I do it, here's how I learned to overcome..." I realize that we must speak out of our experience, and be relevant to people's needs and concerns, but what is our main calling and task? To preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2)

Some so-called "Christian" preaching and teaching does not seem to need the person of Christ — the incarna-

tion of Christ, the healing of Christ, the miracles, of Christ, the death of Christ, the blood of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ, the presence of Christ, the authority of the name of Christ, and the second coming of Christ. If our teaching does not require the presence and power of Christ in order to be successful, it is doubtful that we are preaching the gospel.

I was called to be a preacher of the gospel. That gospel is called "the gospel of Jesus Christ"! It's the story, the good news about Him. Somehow, Jesus got lost in the clutter of a lot of good information about a lot of good ideas. I had to repent. I thought I had gone on to greater things, greater revelations, but what a joke that was! Did I have something better to offer than Christ Himself?

Since that time, it has become my goal to get people attached to Jesus, not to me. It has become my motive to proclaim Him and the gospel about Him into every situation, into every problem, into every human condition.

***Jesus Himself is the message...***

Whatever arises in the problems of life, I am convinced that the best first response is to think about Jesus. Jesus is the chief cornerstone. That means Jesus belongs at the beginning of all our thought processes, and the reference point in solving every problem.

I visited a graduate school missions class, and found myself listening to a discussion between students and the professor. It was mostly a lament on the powerless state of the church (at least in their circles) in the face of very determined and organized power in other world religions. From the

massive people power of the Muslim world to the attractive promise of peace in the New Age Movement, the general condition of the Christian world to them seemed weak and unproductive.

“What then is the distinctive of the Christian faith?”, asked the professor. The students responded with silence. (This class was at one of the finest evangelical colleges in our area.) I waited. No response. I waited longer. Still no response. The professor changed the subject and went on. I was shocked.

What is the distinctive of the Christian faith? What makes Christianity better or unique? Not you or me! There is one answer, and only one.

Jesus Himself. Only Jesus.

Take Jesus out of the “Christian” faith, and what is left? Some religion, some platitudes and some rules. Per-

haps there is some wisdom on how to live, but who can do it without Christ?

Without the living Jesus Christ, Paul wrote, “..we are of all men most to be pitied.” (I Cor. 15:19)

Without the living Christ, Christians are certainly to be pitied. Without the presence and power of Jesus Christ, Christianity is a very poor and inadequate religion.

Ironically, there are some these days who call themselves Christians who do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He did miracles, or that He died on a cross, and who certainly don't believe that He rose from the dead. Some of these people are semi-nary professors and pastors of well-known “Christian” churches.

A recent editorial in our city newspaper was written by one of these “Christian” professors and denominational leaders. He wrote, “It's time

to stop believing in the God of the Old Testament who would wage war against any group of people, or not accept everyone, or claim exclusive rights to the universe. What we need is to be able to see Jesus sitting down with Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius at a heavenly council table and discussing the future of the world.”

Today, a “Jesus seminar” travels the Western world, debunking the text of the New Testament, eliminating all supernatural occurrences recorded in the gospels, shredding the written records as a patchwork of stories and myths. The leaders meet periodically to vote on the words written in the gospels, to decide what were the actual words of Jesus. So far, they have “voted out” about ninety eight percent of His words. “Finding the real Jesus” is the stated goal, but the actual goal is from the spirit of antichrist – denying that Jesus the Son of God ever

came in the flesh!

Praise God there is a real Jesus: born of a virgin, Son of the living God, who upholds all things by the word of His power, Savior, Healer, and coming King. Praise God for Jesus who bore the sin of all, including those who mocked Him, and carried our sicknesses and sorrows. Praise God that He shed His blood for us all, was beaten and whipped and crucified and died! Praise God He intervened and interceded for transgressors like you and me. Praise the Lord that He was buried, and our old sinful self was buried with Him, that our old body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

Hallelujah! There is a real Jesus who fought a real devil, and defeated the kingdoms of real principalities and world rulers of this present darkness. Praise the Lord for a real Jesus who

rose from the dead, who sent shock waves of resurrection power throughout the spiritual world! Praise God that resurrection power is available to you and to me! Praise God that people are being saved and healed and set free through the glorious name of Jesus — regardless of what intellectual garbage is being cast around by unbelieving religious leaders who are trying to gain some sort of advantage by claiming association with Christ.

Praise God that Jesus sits in heaven at the right hand of the Father until all His enemies will be made a footstool for His feet! Praise God that He has been given “all authority in heaven and on earth” and that one day He’s returning to deal with the nations and take over the world!

Praise God for Jesus! He is what makes the difference. He is the One that deserves the honor and the glory.

He is the center of our faith, and the source of our life! He is our life! He Himself is our health! He Himself is our joy and peace, and our righteousness and our wealth! He is our wisdom and He is our knowledge! He is the reason for the existence of the world and He is the One who holds it all together!

What makes the Christian faith different? Only Jesus. Only Jesus is fully God and fully man! Only Jesus provides a solution for the sin of man. Only Jesus gave His life for people! Only Jesus!

Buddha never died for you, nor did Mohammed. And neither of them is sitting on the throne of heaven at the right hand of the Father who loves you. Only Jesus is there!

***I didn't know Jesus very well...***

Some time ago, I told my heavenly Father in prayer that I didn't know

Jesus very well. It was a little embarrassing to say it, since I had been a full time minister of the gospel for almost thirty years. But it was a true statement, and I had a great desire to know Jesus better. I believe God Himself had given me that yearning and had opened my eyes to see that I didn't know as much as I thought I knew. After getting past the embarrassment of realizing I didn't know Jesus very well, I began to ask the Lord to help me to see and know Jesus more and more. I still pray that prayer.

Perhaps you are like me, and realize that you don't know Jesus very well. You may have accepted Him into your life many years ago. Or you may have never accepted Him into your heart. Or, you may have heard very little about this wonderful Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man. You can know Him better.

One day I was reading in Luke 24, and the Lord began to speak to me as I was reading, showing me how He wanted to answer my prayer to know Jesus better. Here is the account:

“That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles out of Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. Suddenly, Jesus himself came along and joined them and began walking beside them. But they didn’t know who he was, because God kept them from recognizing him.

“You seem to be in a deep discussion about something,” he said. “What are you so concerned about?”

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have

happened there the last few days.”

“What things?” Jesus asked.

“The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said.

“He was a prophet who did wonderful miracles. He was a mighty teacher, highly regarded by both God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders arrested him and handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had thought he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. That all happened three days ago.

Then some women from our group of His followers were at His tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said His body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, Jesus’ body was gone, just as the women had said.”

Then Jesus said to them, "You are such foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory?" Then Jesus quoted passages from the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining what all the Scriptures said about himself.

By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus would have gone on, but they begged him to stay the night with them, since it was getting late. So he went home with them. As they sat down to eat, he took a small loaf of bread, asked God's blessing on it, broke it, then gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts feel strangely warm as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem, where the eleven disciples and the other followers of Jesus were gathered. When they arrived, they were greeted with the report, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter!"

Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. He said, "Peace be with you." But the whole group was terribly frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why do you doubt who I am? Look at my hands.

Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do!" As he spoke, he held out his hands for them to see, and he showed them his feet.

Still they stood there doubting, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched.

Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me by Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must all come true." Then he opened their minds to understand these many Scriptures. And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day. With my authority, take this message of re-

pentance to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'there is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me.' You are witnesses of all these things.

"And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

I have wondered what it would have been like if I had been one of those two disciples on the road to Emmaus that day. No doubt, Jesus would have acted in the same way to me as to them. No doubt I would have been pondering all that had gone on in my town of Jerusalem, and would have had many strong feelings about the crucifixion of this man Jesus. And now, having hoped He was the Messiah, hearing reports of His resurrection! Like them my mind would have raced with what it all might mean!

What an awesome thing to happen...to have Jesus Himself in His resurrected body come alongside me on the road and begin to converse with me! What a privilege to have Him talk to me about the Scripture and explain to me about Himself. Perhaps it was a little humbling at first. He called them "foolish people, slow to believe..." (Yes, he would have called me the same.) Yet, wouldn't you like to have Jesus Himself take you through the Bible and show you all the things about Him? What a wonderful teacher!

As I was wishing I could have been there, I was reminded of something really important that Jesus said about the Holy Spirit. He said that the Holy Spirit would show us everything about Himself! (John 16:14,15)

We have someone just as wonderful as Jesus Himself right inside us, to do

for us what Jesus did for the disciples on the road. We have the Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would be with us forever, the Holy Spirit who is also God, who is a person just like Jesus, who has the same nature, the same everything – for He is the Spirit of Jesus AND the Father.

And we have the same Scriptures that Jesus quoted that day. I was reminded that the task of the Holy Spirit was to do for us exactly what Jesus did for the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would “take the things of Mine and show them unto you.” (John 16:14,15)

Wow! We can have the same experience as those disciples...maybe better, since they only had Jesus for a few hours, but we have the Holy Spirit FOREVER! (John 14:16)

So, I began to understand how God was answering my prayer to know

Jesus better. He wanted to take me through the Scriptures (again) and let the Holy Spirit talk to me just like Jesus would do in person and explain to me all about Jesus!

That day He gave us all the "master key" which opens our understanding of the Word and helps us to know Him better. It was the breaking of the bread.

Remember when those disciples finally recognized Jesus? Their eyes were opened as He broke the bread. In a moment they knew it was Him. And then He vanished.

When he broke the bread, they recognized Him.

Jesus had taught people that He was the bread of life. One occasion was just after he multiplied the loaves and fed the five thousand. (John 6) The crowd, having eaten those loaves, wanted Him to do another miracle.

Jesus, however, used the occasion to point them to the "bread of God that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They all said they wanted this bread, not knowing at all what He meant. Jesus then said to them, "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."  
(John 6:51)

Another occasion was at the last supper with the twelve, before Jesus was arrested. He took the bread of Passover and broke it, and said "This is my body, which is broken for you". That memory of Jesus breaking the bread would remain forever in the minds of the disciples, for within hours they saw Him literally become the broken bread in His crucifixion.

We begin to see Jesus clearly when

we see that He is the one who laid down His life for us. He is the one who allowed His body to be broken for our healing. He is the one who allowed His blood to be shed for our sins.

The coming of the Messiah (the Christ) who would suffer and be sacrificed was portrayed and foretold throughout the Old Testament. Look for the "bloodline" of the Bible — the story of redemption, sometimes called the "scarlet thread" which is woven throughout the Bible. It is the story of your Redeemer, Jesus. When you find it, you will come to know Him better, and more clearly understand the good news about Him.

From the first blood sacrifice in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:21) to the slaying of the Passover lamb, God made it clear that an atoning sacrifice would be needed for our sin. Thou-

sands of animals slain each year all prophesied of Jesus the Broken Bread. Look at Psalms 22, the crucifixion Psalm, and at Isaiah 53 to see what happened as that Bread was being broken for you. Meditate on the accounts of the crucifixion, realizing that every form of suffering that Jesus experienced was for your complete healing and your total freedom. Let the Holy Spirit show you Jesus and teach you about Jesus from Genesis to Revelation. He's waiting....

It would be wonderful if Jesus appeared to you in a vision, or a dream, or showed up in your living room some day to have a talk with you. On occasion He does do that. It has happened, though not often.

The main way that we come to see Him, however, is in the written Word, through faith in that Word, as the Holy Spirit brings revelation and un-

derstanding in that Word.

Some are like Thomas who said, "Unless I see, I won't believe." Jesus showed him His scars, and Thomas believed. But Jesus said, "Blessed are those who did not see, yet believe." (John 20:29)

Ask, and allow the Lord do for you what He did for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Let Him take you through the Bible and show you all things about Himself through the great teacher within you – the Holy Spirit. Remember, I John 2 says you don't need anyone to teach you, for you have an anointing, an abiding One, a teacher within you who will teach you everything about Jesus.

### ***Look and Live!***

Focusing your attention on Jesus is the most important thing you can do. If you can fix your eyes on Him, other things fall into place. Panic subsides,

and you become more peaceful. Things confusing sort themselves out, and insurmountable problems become manageable. As we think about Him, we find wisdom for life, and power for living. When we realize what Jesus has done for us, we become overcomers in every area of life.

Looking to Jesus always brings life — not death — for He is the source of life. Looking to him brings help, not trouble, for He is our Advocate (1 John 2:2) , and our Intercessor (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25). This is true regardless of what you have done, or whether you have succeeded or failed (in His eyes or yours). Failure and trouble is the perfect time for looking away to Jesus. It is the best way to find hope. Amazingly, Jesus loves to get us out of the messes we get ourselves into. Perhaps that's why He is called "Savior". We don't deserve this mercy, but that's what

mercy is: undeserved kindness.  
That's why the Bible says "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved!" (Romans 10:13)

A interesting incident took place during the wandering days of the Jews, as recorded in Numbers 21. The Israelites were not a highly cooperative group. They grumbled and complained when things were not as they wished — like we probably would have done in their place. They didn't like the food allotments.

Manna was the complete menu. Scraped off leaves every day, it was a somewhat mysterious substance. (Definition of the word "manna": "what is it?") It was evidently very basic, maybe as exciting as plain tofu. Every day, this food was the same. They had enough of it to eat, but they said, "Our soul loathes this miserable food!" It nourished the body,

but it definitely wasn't "soul food". For some people, soul food would be pizza. For others chips and salsa. For some it is pork fat! For many it would be rice and curry! For the Jews it was not manna, but the leeks and garlic of Egypt that they longed for!

The manna was healthy, but not interesting. They grumbled about it, and thought they were going to die. To be without normal creature comforts, and having to trust God every day evidently made them feel like being on the edge of death.

They grumbled and complained.

This was not a good idea.

"So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among them, and many of them were bitten and died. Then the people came to Moses and cried out, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take away the snakes." So

Moses prayed for the people.

Then the Lord told him, "Make a replica of a poisonous snake and attach it to the top of a pole. Those who are bitten will live if they simply look at it". So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to the top of a pole. Whenever those who were bitten looked at the bronze snake, they recovered!" (Numbers 21: 7-9NLT)

How simple God made it for them. All they had to do was look at the bronze snake, and they lived!

A strange story indeed. It is even stranger when we discover that Jesus identified himself with this bronze snake.

"And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so I, the Son of Man, must be lifted up on a pole, so that everyone who believes in me will have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it".Jn. 3:15-17

Why would Jesus compare Himself to a snake on a pole? Everywhere throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, the serpent – the snake – refers to Satan, not Jesus. The snake personifies evil.

And there is the answer. Jesus knew that He would one day bear the evil of the world on His own shoulders. The snake on the pole pointed directly to that day, when Jesus would hang on the cross. It was on the cross that the sin of the world came on Jesus. He actually personified evil at that point. It was all placed on Him and in Him. According to 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him who knew no

sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Jesus said he would be lifted up just like Moses lifted up that serpent.

“...that everyone who believes may live...eternally!”

The Father made Jesus — who knew no sin — to BE SIN...for us. He somehow became evil on our behalf. At that moment He was the snake on the pole.

And we are to do the same thing as the dying Jews were told to do: Look and live.

This is called redemption. Redemption is the heart of the gospel, and that is what makes it GOOD NEWS!

The sinning Jews, with snake poison killing them, were to do one thing, and one thing alone: they were to look at the bronze snake on the pole.

And all who looked, lived.

We are saved by looking at Jesus. Looking at Him until we see who He is, what He has done for us, and what His promises say to us. Looking at Him until the eyes of our heart open up and faith comes. Looking at Him until we receive what His sacrifice has purchased for us: our cleansing, our salvation, our healing, and our deliverance, our wisdom, our resources, our peace, our joy, and anything else we need.

All of us were in a condition similar to the ones in the wilderness. All of us sinned. God's judgment fell on us all. We live in a world full of the results of sin. The serpent bit us all, and all were dying eternally. "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23) Like Moses placed the snake on the pole, Jesus was lifted up on a cross, there to carry our sins, our sicknesses, and

our judgment. What are we to do? The same as they. Just look. That's all they could do. That's all we can do. We can do no more. We cannot heal ourselves or save ourselves.

The Amplified Bible records their looking this way: "...and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked to the serpent of bronze attentively, expectantly, with a steady gaze, he lived." (Numbers 21:9)

If we can but see Him with the eyes of faith, we will live. Really live! For Jesus said He has come to give us life, abundant life! (John 10:10)

Look at Him. Keep looking. Keep your eyes fixed on Him. Give Him all your attention. Find every way possible to keep looking at Jesus. Look at Him until revelation comes. Look at Him until understanding comes. Look at Him in the Bible – from Genesis to Revelation. Ask the Holy Spirit

to show you Jesus, and what He has accomplished for you. Praise Him and worship Him and thank Him and talk to Him and think about Him.

Look and live.

But isn't there more that we must do? Don't we need to do the right things, to live like He tells us to live! Yes, we do. But that all comes after we look at Him until we can see Him with our hearts and He becomes more real to us than the things of this world. Until that happens, we are unable to know His voice, and unable to do what He says. It is when the eyes of our heart are enlightened, it is when we know Him to be real and we know Him for who He really is, that things begin to change – on the inside of us. Then our life and our behavior will change.

When we see Jesus as He is, and see what He has done, and see what has been made available for us, then we

begin to receive from Him. And in the receiving, we begin to change. Our views change, our heart changes, our behavior changes. Having seen Him, we cannot but live for Him and obey His Word.

It was a miracle, of course, that just looking at a bronze serpent on a pole restored those dying Jews. It made no natural sense. It was a matter of childlike faith and obedience.

Jesus is the Father's provision, and He is received only in the Father's way. That way, more than anything else, is the look of faith. Jesus revealed and Jesus received – these two things make the Christian faith Christ-ian. Without looking and living, it all turns to man-made religion.

The mystery is this — that a miracle happens to us in the looking itself. As we look to Him and at Him, something supernatural happens in us and to us.

2 Corinthians 3:18 describes it this way: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord"

Beholding the Lord with unveiled face... This is looking at Jesus with faith and with understanding in our hearts. It is looking away from ourselves and our problems to focus on Him - on who He is, on what He has done for us, and on what He has promised in His Word. When we are doing this, something else is happening. Transformation is taking place. We are being transformed into the very image that we are looking at! Just by looking and continuing to look at Jesus produces a change that can never be accomplished another way. It is the miracle of salvation, full salvation, ongoing salvation in our daily lives. It is not making ourselves

better, or trying hard to be a good Christian. It is filling our minds and hearts with the truth about Jesus, filling our mouths with His praises, filling our thoughts with the things that He has said and written, and worshipping Him.

Look at Him. Look away to Jesus, until He becomes more real to you than earthly life and its problems.

Hebrews 12:1 describes the process this way: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish." NLT

The eyes with which we look at Jesus are the eyes of our heart, our spiritual

eyes. God has given each of us the ability to see spiritually. This spiritual eyesight is activated when we turn to the Lord, according to 2 Cor. 3:16: "the veil is removed when a man turns to the Lord." It is of course the Holy Spirit that reveals Christ to us. Jesus said of the Spirit "He will take of (receive, draw upon) what is Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.." (John 16:14 Amplified)

Having our eyes opened to see the Lord as He is, changes everything about our lives. It certainly did for Job. Job was a good man who came into a season of tragedy and loss through the destructive work of Satan. Many suffering people have looked to Job for answers. Job was a person like us. Not knowing the spiritual warfare "behind the scenes" of his problems, Job tended to do what we do — blame God for our trouble.

Job's friends, on the other hand, were trying to blame Job himself for the trouble.

Then God revealed Himself to Job, and that changed everything. Job repented of his suspicions about God, God affirmed Job as righteous, and Job finally affirmed God as righteous — not because God answered all his questions (God did not answer His questions.) It was because he had seen the Lord. He had no more questions once he had seen the Lord.

Seeing Jesus Christ with the eyes of our heart, a personal revelation, is the beginning of everything.

Peter had it.

“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

“Well,” they replied, “some say John

the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

Then he asked them, “Who do you say I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you lock on earth will be locked in heaven, and whatever you open on earth will be opened in heaven.” (Matt. 16:13-19 NLT)

Some may get this revelation from a special visitation by the Lord Himself, but most of us get this clear revela-

tion of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit revealing Christ to us through the written Word, the Bible. This may come as we read the Bible, or as we hear someone tell us about Jesus, or as we hear a preacher proclaiming Him or Bible teacher explaining about Jesus. As we hear or read, the Holy Spirit shines the light on the Word of God, and that turns on the light in our heart. We are then able to see Jesus with our spiritual eyes, the eyes of faith. It gives us an internal "knowing", a deep awareness of Him who we cannot see with our natural eyes. This produces faith in us.

Each one of us needs this work of the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our heart to see Jesus clearly. Ask God to show you Jesus. Invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see Him. Then open your Bible and begin to read and meditate, looking for a personal un-

derstanding and knowledge of Jesus Christ. It will come.

Some of you who are believers need this ministry of the Spirit and the Word, for your faith has become stale, and you are trying to exist on past experiences with God and things that others have told you about Jesus. Like Job, you were living on what you had "heard about God". Ask the Holy Spirit to open your spiritual eyes, that you might see Jesus with the eyes of your heart.

Looking at Jesus is as simple as looking in the Word. Meditating in the Word with an open heart and humble mind allows the Holy Spirit to do His work inside of us. This is why Paul wrote as he did in Ephesians 1, after proclaiming great truth about Jesus: "...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revela-

tion in the knowledge of Him (Christ). I pray that the "eyes of your heart would be enlightened, that you will know the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (believers), and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." (Ephesians 1:17,18) NAS

Every book of the Bible has in some way Jesus Christ in view. Jesus and His redemptive work are in the fabric of every book, directly or indirectly. He is the main topic, because He is the revelation of God the Father, and because His work of redemption is the main message of the Bible.

Take another look at Him. A long one. A persistent one. Until your eyes are opened wide to see Him. Then His life will come to you, more abundantly than every before. You will look...and live.

*Jesus, we want to see you. We want to meet You, and to know You better. We are tired of the world and all it has for us, and have come to the place where all we want is You. We want to have our minds filled with You, and our hearts filled with You. We want to spend more time in Your presence, and more time in Your Word. We want to be with You wherever You are, and follow You wherever You go. Help us to keep our attention on You, that we might be changed into Your image, that we might become like You in every way.*