

Powers Of Christ

Strength to Draw Upon

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I would like to begin today by reading some quotes. Some of us may have heard these quotes before.

Abigail Adams, the wife of our second president, wrote to her husband during the Revolutionary War: "Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could."

A man named Ely Colbertson said, "Power politics is the diplomatic name for, 'The Law of the Jungle.'"

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Power is the first good."

Erik Fromm, on the other hand, said, "The lust for power is not rooted in strength, but in weakness."

Thomas Hobbs, always the realist, said, "The reputation of power, is power."

Hubert Humphrey wrote, "Power tends to be a substitute for judgment, and wisdom."

Theodore Roosevelt said, "Speak softly, and carry a big stick. You will go far."

And then, the Roman named Seneca said, "Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power."

Now, each of these quotations contains an idea about power worthy of thoughtful consideration. However, philosophically, they are all over the map. Some are cynical, while others are more optimistic. But together as a whole, they expose humanity's dual nature regarding power—wanting it—fascinated by it—drawn to it like moths to a fire; but also repelled by its ability to corrupt.

Power itself is not necessarily good or evil. It is something that can be used in a good or bad way. It is just a matter of how we approach power. I am not talking violence, but just power—authority—the ability to get things done.

As Americans, we tend to distrust political power, deeply. It seems to be a part of our historic and cultural "DNA." Our nation was founded in response to a king who the

colonists considered a tyrant. And, therefore, when we got together to craft the founding documents, they were designed to check and balance power, so that no one, or no entity could accumulate too much of it. However, over the many years, this has eroded to a great degree, and power has accumulated in various places.

On the other hand, just about every American believes in the power of money. We believe in the power of commerce and industry. We believe in the power of ingenuity, and innovation; we believe in the power of ability; we even believe in the power of celebrity. We just tend to pick and choose the kinds of power that we will approve.

Personally, when it comes down to each individual, most of us feel powerless. We are not rich, or famous, or highly educated. We are not socially well placed. We do not have a famous name; we do not have a great idea. We have no influence, we think. Even our kids fail to mind us half the time. What kind of power do we have? We seem to lack the power to forge our own way. So, we find ourselves carried along by the major events and trends of the day, just like everyone else. We have no power to put on the brakes, or to jam in our sword and say, "Here and no further." We are just wafted along with things. "Poor, poor, pitiful, little ol' me."

Where do we turn?

As Christians we know the answer to this conundrum. God is the One to whom we turn. He has all the power we need, and then some! His power is absolutely limitless, and inexhaustible.

I would like to begin by looking at a passage in Psalm 62.

Psalm 62:11 God has spoken once, twice I have heard this, that power belongs to God.

All power flows from Him. He either gives it directly, or He allows certain ones to take it, have it, and use it. He promises to provide us with sufficient power to live, and to overcome, and to grow as His spiritual children. In addition, in His Kingdom, He has promised us that He will share His awesome power with us forever. That is pretty neat.

But, even though we are powerless in this age, even though we feel like we do not have a chance to face up to problems, the trials, the powerful people of this world, we do have a link to the One who has all the power of the universe, because we are His children.

And so, His power is real to us in our lives to bring us to where He wants us to be.

Now, Jesus Christ is our Mediator and High Priest between us and the Father who has all this power. From the Father through Him flow all the promised blessings, and promised powers that are available to us. So, from the Father, to the Son, and then out to all of us flow all these powers.

And, my task today, to which I have set myself is to list and explore some of these powers that Jesus Christ has so we can know that they are available, and access them in faith in times of need.

I would like to move forward in the Bible to Matthew 28. Christ has already risen from the grave, and had appeared to His disciples. Then as we get to the end of this passage, He gives them "The Great Commission." That is the section I would like to read:

Matthew 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

It is interesting that upon discerning that some of His disciples doubted, He responds with this appraisal to them of His infinite authority. Here they were. (Just think about this.) They were still in shock, even though it might have been 30 days or so by this time. But, the momentous events that occurred were still ringing in their ears. They were still shaking their heads over all that happened. In addition, they were still shocked by the fact of the crucifixion, and the threat to their own lives—they were wanted men.

Of course, the resurrection would spook anyone! I mean, this seems so normal, however, to them this was just amazing. They saw Him die. They saw Him nailed there on the tree. They knew that He was dead, and was put into the grave. Then three days, and three nights later, He was alive again. It was not just some seeming death, but it was real. This was mind-boggling to them. And of course, you have to put into all of this the fact that Jesus was not just appearing to them and saying, "Peace, peace." He was giving them instruction. He was giving them marching orders during this time. He was

expanding their view regarding their job, and what they were going to have to do. This was all becoming real to them, that they were going to have to go out and preach the gospel—alone—and in foreign lands to people they do not know, people who might harm them, or kill them. All this was crashing down on them, and of course not everyone was of the constitution of Peter or John, some of them doubted.

Therefore, how did Jesus reply?

He said, "Guys, I have got all the power of the universe in my hand. Why do you doubt? Look! This is what I want you to do, and I am going to fill you with that power, and I will be with you every step of the way."

We would probably doubt also. I am sure we would. We would doubt our abilities. We would doubt how prepared we were for something like that. We would certainly doubt our safety. In addition, we would really doubt the effects on our relationships. "How is this going to affect my relationship with my wife, or children, or parents? They are going to think that I am some sort of kook."

They had all these doubts. They were unsure. Their life had been turned upside down. And when that happens, a person doubts just about everything. Their confidence drops to nothing, and their faith just droops, and seems withered.

However, Jesus informs them, and us, that power is available through Him. Not just power, not just any old power, but limitless power—the power of very God. Beyond all that, which is greater to even think about, is that our wise and loving elder brother who has walked the walk before us doles out the power. He knows what we need before we need it. Before we even ask, He has is ready to give. He is the One who gives us the task. He knows what is necessary to accomplish those tasks, and so He has it set aside and waiting for us when we need it.

The power is not only limitless, and large, but it is also given by a wise Supplier, the wisest One in the whole universe.

Not only do we have the power of God at our disposal, we have God Himself manning the throttle, giving what we need, and more when we need more, less when we need less. Who could ask for anything more? This is a fact of Christian life that should infuse us with confidence and faith. He is our best buddy. He is our elder brother, the one watching out for us. And, He is there and willing to give the power that only He is able to give.

Now, I have assembled a handful of powers of Jesus Christ to consider. I certainly could not have gotten them all in here. The Bible is just chocked full of powers that God and Christ have.

I have six I would like to go over today. Certainly they are not exhaustive or complete by any means. However, I have chosen these six specifically because they illustrate various aspects of our lives in which we may need God's help at some time or another. His powers in these examples we are going to go through will be shown to be available to meet those needs. Therefore, whatever the crisis, it does not matter what, it could be anything; Jesus is prepared to give us the power to get through it, and overcome it.

THE POWER TO COMMAND NATURE

This passage contains a very well known miracle that Jesus did, the healing of the Centurion's servant:

Matthew 8:5-10 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

Matthew 8:13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Notice the centurion's clear understanding of how Christ's power works. "Only speak a word, and it shall be done." That is all that he needed. He knew Jesus' power was real. He had no doubt about the power. All Jesus would have to do was speak, and it would be done. It did not matter if He was touching him, or several feet away, or fifty miles away. All He had to do was speak, and it would be done, because he knew, as a centurion, that when one in authority issues a command, it is done. He knew, whether he understood the scripture or not, the gist of Isaiah 55:11:

Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

God's power is absolute, and when He sends His power out to do something, it gets done. It will not come back in vain not having accomplished what it was sent out to do. And the centurion understood this. The only catch, if you will, that he saw, was to get Jesus to agree to make the command. That is all he had to do. He had to go to Jesus, and convince Him that He should say, "Your servant will be healed." That is all the catch that the centurion saw in it. The power was there. The centurion saw this aspect of Jesus Christ, as a matter of only, "Would He do it?" He had no doubt that He could do it, because he understood power. Of course, he had the faith to know that if Jesus agreed, it would be done. His servant was healed as soon as Jesus Christ spoke the word.

In a different example of His power over nature, turn to Mark:

Mark 4:35-41 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing? [Look, we are dying, here! Do you not care about us?]" Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

Talk about a stunning miracle! A powerful storm squall line raced across the Sea of Galilee, and it tossed massive waves, and threatened to sink even the larger boat they were in.

Now, there were fishermen among them who were used to sailing on the Sea of Galilee, and they were putting all their skills and experiences into keeping them afloat, but the boat was filling faster than they could bail.

Then there was Jesus, fast asleep in the stern, absolutely unconcerned about all this

happening around Him. Most of us would have been at the gunnels gripping them with our tightest grip, our knuckles turning white, wondering how soon they were going to drown, and not if they were going to drown. It was just a matter of time.

Then they wake Him up, He just calmly rises, and commands the storm to cease, and an eerie calm descends over them. He turns to them, and says, "What are you so afraid of? Where is your faith?" This just makes them all the more afraid because His calm, and His certainty of safety, and security just unnerved them. "Who is this Man who contained the storm?"

This was early in His ministry, and they have not had a great many experiences with Him yet. This experience over nature, over a storm, was just incredible to them—what power He displayed in His calm command.

Only today do we have the scientific know-how to realize the massive forces involved in weather, like thunderstorms, tornadoes, and hurricanes. Nevertheless, He stilled it with a word. That is awesome in its fullest sense.

Whether it is disease, or whether it is a raging storm, He has the power to fix the problem. Why?

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

That is where His power is over nature! He made it! Therefore, creation obeys the voice of its Creator. It only makes sense that He could do this with a word, to tell the seas to be calm, and the storm to quit raging. He told animals to go to Noah, two by two. He brought a great flood. He can heal diseases.

We have access to this wonderful Creator's power. So, when we have problems with nature—the natural world with storms, droughts, floods, fires, insects, animals, and plants, diseases, and allergies—whatever it happens to be, He has the power to solve the problem, and to bring us through safely!

THE POWER TO CLEANSE US FROM SIN

This next passage is an obvious one. Most of us understand that He has the power to cleanse us from sin, but I thought it would be a good idea to review this quickly.

Luke 5:17-25 Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them. Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus [He could not ignore him]. When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Another stupendous miracle!

It is interesting to recognize how Jesus approaches this truth, that He can forgive sin. He obviously does it to tweak the Pharisees just a teensy little bit, and reveal to them just who He was. However, the really interesting part to me is that He implies that it is easier to say that your sins are forgiven, than it is to heal a person. That is true. It is easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven you," than it is to heal someone of some very serious condition like paralysis.

But, beyond the saying, His ability to forgive sin ultimately cost Him His own life! That is not easy at all! He made it look easy because He is God in the flesh, but it was not an easy thing for Him to have to go through all that He did go through to forgive the sin ultimately.

However, He proves His ability to forgive sin by healing this paralytic. As God in the flesh, He had the authority to forgive sin. Now that He has gone through the crucifixion, and paid the penalty for our sins, He has that authority in spades, because He now sits there at the Father's right hand. It is through His blood that we are forgiven.

I do not want you to think that Jesus begrudges the fact that He can forgive us, because

He gives His grace to us freely, cheerfully, and mercifully. It is a power that we can access, because He is God and went through everything—all the necessary steps—to make sure that it would come to pass.

Here is another well-known case:

Mark 1:40-42 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

Here He cleanses a leper of his putrid, rotting flesh. The man's extremities were horribly diseased, and decaying on him. In a modern term, he was a dead man walking. Jesus had the power to reverse even this horrible process, and to make the unclean clean.

Of course, the more important thing is its spiritual parallel. He takes us who are spiritually dying and decaying, and He cleans us up, and purifies us. I mean, not only does He clean us up, but He also purifies us for the Kingdom of God. He takes a hunk of rotting flesh, cleans it up, and makes it into a glorious being—all by His power.

You can see this in Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her [why?], so that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, [but it does not end there] so that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

This is speaking generally about the church as a whole, however, it happens to us individually as well. He takes us—hunks of junk, as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong used to say—and He makes us into something glorious, perfect, pure, and holy—totally without blemish.

So, no matter how spiritually dirty we feel we are, no matter what we end up doing, He has the power to wash us clean, to cleanse us from sin, to forgive us, and to make us as white as snow. This is a wonderful thing to have in mind when we have stumbled, fallen down, and gotten really dirty. But, once we pick ourselves up, we know who to go

to, to make us really white again.

THE POWER TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF SATAN

I think that this next passage is so cool! I really would have like to have been there to see this. Maybe I will see it replayed someday.

Matthew 4:8-11 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he [Satan] said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

In my mind's eye, I can see Jesus there, standing on the mountain with Satan lurking off to one side, saying, "Look at all this out here! It can all be yours. All you have to do is worship me!" Then, Jesus locks onto him and commands, "Get away from Me!" And Satan runs away like a dog whose master has just kicked him. That is why I think this is so cool—I have got this think in my mind's eye about how it might have been.

Think about this. Jesus was under great duress, here. He had been starving for 40 days without food and water. He was physically weak. Now He was being personally tempted by the greatest demon of all. However, after those 40 days fasting, Jesus was so spiritually strong.

These words, "Away with you, Satan," by this fallen angel's Creator, ended this episode with great finality. "Okay! That is enough! Get out of here!" Satan had to slink away in utter defeat. Nothing that he had tried put Jesus off the beam. Jesus was sure and steady. He would do what His Father had sent Him to do, and He would not be persuaded one way or the other.

This next passage is one of the great reasons Jesus came to this earth. It says:

Hebrews 2:14-15 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

So, by coming to this earth and giving up all that He had in heaven at the Father's right hand, and partaking with us human life, and of course, dying as a perfect sacrifice for our sins, He destroyed Satan's evil plans and works. That was one of the greatest accomplishments of His life and death, and His resurrection, because it was through His resurrection that He conquered death. Death could not hold Him.

By doing all this—by conquering Satan—Jesus released us from our bondage to that evil being, to that evil world, and even the pulls of our human nature absorbed from him. Then also, He releases us from that bondage to death itself.

We still have one death to die, just as it says in chapter 9, but that death cannot hold us, just like it could not hold Jesus Christ. Therefore, He has power over the devil, and the devils' works, and over death itself; and He continues to exert this power as our High Priest to check and defeat Satan at every point, and every turn on our behalf. When Satan makes a wrong move, and Jesus is there to check it, because Satan can now only do what Jesus Christ lets him do. He has proven Himself the Master.

John has a similar take on it:

I John 3:8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

He was made flesh, incarnate, for the very purpose of destroying Satan's works, among other things. He wanted to make sure that Satan's accomplishments would not succeed, and would not come to any fruition. He wanted to bring down the devil's Empire, and to free those who are caught under it. And He accomplished it perfectly.

No matter how aggressively Satan comes out against us, we have the power on our side that is proved to be stronger than he.

Do you remember the little parable Jesus gave back in Luke 11:20?

Luke 11:20-22 But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

The strong man is Satan the devil. The stronger man is Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ came into Satan's own defenses, and utterly defeated him. We have that to rely on! We have a power on our side that is so much stronger than Satan the devil.

THE POWER TO TEACH AND CLARIFY

Mark 1:21-22 Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

(Verse 22 is similar to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7.)

Upon inaugurating His ministry, Jesus made a real splash simply by the way that He taught them God's way of life. His "yes" was yes, and His "no" was no. He laid it out very plainly. He was very confident. "This is how it is, people." He just gave them the truth. He did not hem-and-haw about it, certainly not like the scribes, evidently. They taught more tentatively, and it was probably just as well. They had a more, "Well, perhaps it was this, or perhaps it is that."

Have you ever read any of the Jewish writings, like the Mishna? (I do not recommend it.) They lay out a premise by saying, "Rabbi Akeba says this." Then they will say, "But Rabbi Solomon says that." Then they will say, "Rabbi Eliazar says this other thing, while this other rabbi says that other thing." But then back comes Rabbi Eliazar who says, "No, it could not be this way," and then back comes Rabbi Solomon who says, "Rabbi Eliazar has is all wrong, it is this way." It is a whole list of premises and supporting statements, or conjectures, or whatever.

And if this is how the scribes taught back then, I can understand why Jesus saying—"This is it! A, B, C, is how it works"—would surprise the people. They were used to the scribes saying, "Well, you know, maybe this, or that, or something else." But Jesus was so straightforward. He knew the law, and had perfect understanding of it. His teachings were clear, and unambiguous. That is what we have in God's word.

People try to come up with all kinds of interpretations, but in the main it does not need to be interpreted. Jesus teachings are so clear.

The next passage is found in John 6, and it shows the clear teaching of Jesus once the

key is understood, seeing it through spiritual eyes. He is making an analogy, but the people there who were hearing it were taking it literally, and getting all offended about it.

John 6:54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

"Oh my! He is talking about cannibalism."

"I cannot accept this!"

"This man is an awful preacher."

"He is cannot be the Messiah, He is not true."

"He is teaching us to eat Him."

John 6:60-63 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? Would that shock you? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing."

He is giving them the key, here, to this problem, this teaching. The spirit gives life. The flesh is not involved here.

John 6:63 The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

John 6:67-69 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ["Are you of like mind to follow these foolish people?"] But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus was so plainly spoken that He tended to offend people with His bluntness, and His use of illustration, and analogy.

Now, without any spiritual insight, seeing this entirely literally and physically, His teaching here sounds just like cannibalism—"Each of you must take a nibble off of Me, and drink some of my blood." What are we? All vampires? No.

Spiritually, however, His teaching is right on the mark. He says, "Just as we must ingest food and drink to live in this physical life, we must also ingest Christ, and His way of life, fully, to have spiritual, eternal life." Christ embodied the Word of God. He was the teaching.

Therefore, it is like our having to ingest Him, and all that He stood for; and also to drink His blood, which has other spiritual ramifications for us. It is quite imperative for us, for our eternal life, for our spiritual life, to be consuming what He puts out for us.

He interpreted it all right at the end of the passage. "Look at this spiritually, not physically," He said in verse 63. "The words that I speak," He said are what is going to give us life. They are spirit, and they are life.

That is what He was talking about—His teaching. We have got to ingest His teaching all the time with the same regularity as we eat our meals each day. That is how plain it really is. It is clear, once you have all the keys that you need. He provided them too. "Look at this spiritually, not physically; I am talking about words, spiritual words that have the power to give you eternal life." It is so clear, once you have the key.

This next passage in Isaiah 42 shows one of His purposes for coming as the Son of God.

Isaiah 42:21 The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable.

Next, we will see a New Testament interpretation by Jesus Himself,

Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

These two verses go together. Part of His mission was to magnify, glorify, exalt, clarify, and fulfill the Law. That is, He came to show and to explain the full intent of God's law. He came mostly to show it by living it. Not only did He teach it through instruction, but He also lived it. Then, these men who wrote about His life told us through the scripture

all that He did, and how He took the law, and put it to use.

Things like Sabbath keeping. There is no place in the gospels where it specifically says, "Thou shalt keep the Sabbath day." Now, at the time and place, there was no need for that, because in Judea, and Galilee, everybody knew that you should keep the Sabbath day.

Therefore, the question is not whether you should keep that day, but rather how you keep it holy.

So what did Jesus say? First He starts in Mark 2 by telling us He is the Lord of the Sabbath day. If the Lord of the Sabbath keeps the Sabbath in a certain way, then the servants of that Lord should follow His example. Therefore, He proceeds to give us a full lifetime of examples of how to keep the Sabbath. It is by this means that He fulfilled the law. That does not mean that He did away with it, or kept it in our stead, but that He just came to show us the full aspect of this law that said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." He lived it. He showed us how to do it. He made it. He exalted it from a physical law of "Thou shalt," to all the little intricate judgments that He had to make about keeping the Sabbath. Therefore, we have those to draw from.

He did this, not only regarding the Sabbath, but all of the other commandments as well. Just look at the Sermon on the Mount. He goes through and says, "You have heard from of old that such and such" He quotes commandment, for example, "Thou shalt not murder [Matthew 6:21]." Then, He proceeds to give us five additional verses on how that should be spiritually applied in the New Testament situation. The same thing was done with adultery in the next section. Then marriage too. Then He talks about the ninth commandment from verses 33-37 [Matthew 6 again].

He does this sort of thing throughout the gospels. "You have heard it was said of old...But I say unto you..." This is a clue to us that He is giving an expanded version, and clarification to help us to see the full extent and intention in a true Christian's life.

He has the power, then, to show how God's law works. And that power is still available to us. We can tap into that power—to teach, and clarify—and ask Him to help us understand how to apply His law to whatever situation we happen to be in. And if you understand the remarks by James, in chapter 1, "If you need wisdom, ask and it will be given to you," do not doubt, He will give it. The same thing is true with understanding, and knowledge. He will give it. He has the power. He is proven it right here in the scripture. All we need to do is ask. Even that is in the Sermon on the Mount. He says, "Ask, seek, and knock." He will give it.

THE POWER TO SEE INTO OUR HEARTS

This next passage comes from the episode where Jesus calls Nathanael.

John 1:44-49 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Now Nathanael had been in a secret place away from prying eyes, hidden somewhere. No one could see him. But, Jesus knew. He had been there. How? Because Jesus is the Son of God. And when Jesus first laid eyes on him—physical eyes, because He had known where he was—He saw right through the man, as it were. Jesus knew that Nathanael was a straightforward, no frills, and you-see-what-you-get kind of guy. Therefore, Jesus said, "Behold An Israelite in whom there is no guile. There is no deceit in this man. He is going to give it to you straight whether you like it or not. A very blunt man. One glance, and Jesus had the man pegged.

Here is another passage:

John 2: 23-25 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

He knew all men, it says. He knew what was in men. Not only could He discern individuals, He could perceive crowds, and masses, and all of mankind if need be. He knew individuals, and groups inside and out. He had discernment of thought, moods, attitudes, and intentions—everything, in a perfect way.

Why was that (beyond the fact that He was God in the flesh)? Why did He have such true insight into everybody? Because He was sinless. He believed the truth. He was not

tainted by prejudices. He could look at you and see you perfectly. He is the One of all human beings who knows human nature the best. He thought it, but was not tainted by it. He was honest about everything—perfectly honest. Now glorified, He has this power to the nth degree. He can see into our deepest most hidden areas with perfect clarity—even if we cannot. We hide things from ourselves. We have secret sins. But they are not secret to Him.

Here is another passage:

John 2:11-13 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest [Kingdom of God], lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

He has perfect vision into our souls, as it were. He knows our strengths; He knows what we are capable of. He knows what we are not quite capable of. He knows our weaknesses. This is both positive and negative. Nevertheless, even though we cringe because He can see into those deep crevasses where we try to hide our human nature, even so, this aspect of Jesus Christ is mostly positive.

How can I say that?

It is positive because His power to discern us completely, and perfectly allows Him to give us the aid we need to bring us into His rest. He spots the problem, and comes up with a solution to help us to overcome it. Then, He provides the power and the faith for us to grow and overcome it.

Notice what He says, continuing:

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

This power to see into our hearts is an absolutely positive thing because He can show us what we need to see, so that we will be in the Kingdom of God. He is the perfect High Priest.

HE HAS THE POWER TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE AND INSPIRE US TO ATTEMPT IT

This next passage takes place right after feeding of the five thousand.

Matthew 14:22-33 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly, You are the Son of God."

Now, this may be Jesus' most stupendous miracle. It is an utter impossibility as most men consider it, especially in this day and age.

To walk on water, in the midst of a tossing sea, as if He were on dry land, stretches credulity. You can imagine men, down through history, men like Thomas Jefferson saying, "This does not wash." Therefore, he makes his own Bible where he tosses out miracles like this, because he just could not imagine anyone—even the Son of God—being able to walk on water. It goes against everything that we have ever learned or experienced in this physical life. Few could even imagine it. But here, Jesus does this as if He is taking a stroll in the park. "Oh, I was just up on the mountain, and thought I would come and see you guys out in the middle of the lake." He had the power to contravene the very laws of physics.

How did He do this? Nobody has ever come up with any good explanations. Some kooks a few years ago said that there was a sudden ice storm, and He walked out on the ice. This miracle just does not make any sense to the unconverted mind.

However, it goes on further! Peter asked to do it too, and Jesus said, "Sure! Come on out. The water's fine!" And the man, Peter, actually takes a few steps out on the water, just like Jesus did.

Therefore, not only did Jesus the Son of God do it, but also Peter was able to do it, so long as he had the faith, and kept his eyes on Jesus Christ. Of course, he began to sink when his faith wavered; when he began to see that the wind was boisterous, and the sea was being tossed; and the boat was below him, and then it was above him; he faltered.

Jesus caught him before he was harmed, and brought him to safety. Jesus had the power to do the impossible. Seeing this, Peter had the faith to give it a try.

Jesus commands, "You be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect [Matthew 5:48]." "Impossible," says the skeptic. "You cannot be perfect. If you try to keep the law, all you do is end up trying to justify yourselves, and that will never wash." Is that not what they say to us? "You cannot be perfect. It is an impossibility."

God says you can. If we follow the example of Christ, we find that it is not so impossible, because Jesus has the power make it happen if we express a bit of faith.

I am not saying we will keep it perfectly, or that we will be perfect in this flesh. However when God gives a command, He gives the power, also, to accomplish it.

It is not impossible. It just seems that way. Jesus says, "You shall sit with Me on My throne, and rule all nations."

"Impossible," says the going-to-heaven crowd. "That is not what is going to happen."

However, by His example, and the exercise of His power, we will be changed and glorified as His brothers and sisters. It says that we will be kings and priests with Him forever in His kingdom on this earth [1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:10].

It is not impossible to be very God. Because, Jesus says that you are going to be like Him. And what is He? [God]

The next passage is in Luke.

Luke 18:26-27 And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Like it said, He has the power to make the impossible possible.

In conclusion, turn to Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **for—He—who—promised—is—faithful.**

These powers, and many others, are available to us because the same Jesus Christ who exhibited these powers on earth now sits at God's right hand as our High Priest. He both makes intercession for us before God, and empowers us through the Holy Spirit to learn, and to overcome, and to grow into His image.

The power is there. Our God, and Jesus Christ is willing to give it.

Will we make use of it?