

The Glorifier of Christ

by J. Sidlow Baxter

The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by inspiring the Bible, guiding the writers, and leading the readers to Christ.

Duration: 43:46

Scripture: Exodus 32:32, Matthew 27:50, John 16:14, Acts 2:32, Ephesians 2:8, Revelation 1:7, Revelation 19:6

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit in glorifying Jesus. He emphasizes that throughout the Bible, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the central theme is Jesus. The speaker uses the example of the Bible itself to illustrate this, stating that the Bible is Jesus from beginning to end. He explains that in the Old Testament, there are prophecies about Christ, in the Gospels, we see the historical account of Jesus, in the Acts and Epistles, we witness the experience of Christ, and in the Apocalypse, we anticipate the coming glory of Christ. The speaker concludes by highlighting the progression of Jesus' story: He comes, He dies, He lives, and He saves.

Transcript

As a beginning to my study with you this morning, may I direct you to the Gospel according to John, chapter 16, and verse 14. Not indeed the whole verse, but simply the first sentence in it. John's Gospel, 16th chapter, verse 14, and the first sentence in it, these are words of our Master concerning the Holy Spirit, the heavenly paraclete who was soon to come.

Jesus says this, He shall glorify me. There it is, and that's all, but how tremendous it is. He shall glorify me.

And I think we may immediately learn a spacious and profound truth, even from the order of the words in this sentence. The little sentence begins with the pronoun, he, referring to the Holy Spirit. The little sentence ends with the pronoun, me, referring, of course, to our dear Savior.

Listen, dear brothers and sisters, whenever the Holy Spirit is at the beginning of the sentence, the Lord Jesus is always the object of it. In other words, everything which has its origination in the Holy Spirit has its goal and its crown and its culmination in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now that is what I want to occupy our minds for a little while this Friday morning.

Everything which originates with the Holy Spirit, by divine necessity, has its consummation in Christ. Now there are so many wonderful exemplifications of that that I'm lost for choice. I scarcely know which to pick

out in the short time that I shall be detaining you.

I feel rather like that old skipper who, on being asked where he sailed his vessel, replied with naughty coyness, Sir, I am restricted to the ocean. I feel rather like that with a subject like this, restricted to the ocean. So let me just, for the sake of time economy, pick on one or possibly two of the great illustrations which we have of this tremendous reality that everything which originates in the Holy Spirit has its eventual coronation in Christ.

Illustration number one. Mr. Chairman and friends, here it is on our desk this morning, this dear old Bible of ours. How did the Bible come to us? Well, if you and I are minded to receive the repeated testimony of the Bible to its own origin, we cannot long be left in doubt, can we? Over and over again, with categorical finality, the Bible tells us that behind all its human contributors there was the all-controlling Spirit of God.

To quote just one classic pronouncement on the matter from the second epistle of Peter, chapter one, no prophecy in olden times came by the will of man, but consecrated men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. And I think it worthy of mention that the Greek verb which Peter there uses and which we translate by our English verb, moved, is just about the most vigorous verb you could find in any language, either extinct or extant. I only need to remind you that it comes in that late chapter in the Acts of the Apostles which describes Paul's hazardous voyage to Rome.

We're told how that luckless vessel got caught in the teeth of a maritime tempest which old sailors of long ago used to call uraquilo. There was no use struggling against the frantic fury of that tempest. They simply had to let the ship drive, and now I quote, and the ship was driven by the tempest.

Believe it or not, that is the verb which Peter uses when he says, holy men of old spake as they were gripped, held, constrained, moved, urged, borne along by the Holy Spirit. Now I may be old fashioned, and by the way I won't apologize for that, for I'm not a bit fond of some of the new fashions. I may be old fashioned, but when I see a verb of that strength used in connection with the inspiration of the Bible, it strongly savors to me of that much castigated theory known as verbal inspiration.

Mr. Chairman, I may as well blurt it out and have it done with. I believe in the unique, plenary, full, and verbal inspiration of the Biblical documents as they were originally given to men from God. There ought to have been more hallelujahs than that, however we'll accept the few gratefully.

Now, yes I mean that, I have always said, and I will say it again, the life and death issue of Protestant Christianity is the inspiration and authority of the Bible. That's basic to everything, however I won't digress to discuss that. Now, just because the Bible is the original product of the Holy Spirit, just because of that, the all-pervading, dominating theme of the Bible is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me quickly remind you how on one occasion our Lord wheeled round on those religious aristocrats of old time Jewry, known to us as the Pharisees, and to their bewilderment he said, Moses, in whom they were bragging but by whom they were condemned, Moses wrote of me. I'm not surprised that they were astounded, they'd never heard anybody come within a million miles of saying anything like that before. Think of it, Moses 1500 years historically prior to Jesus, Moses the most venerated figure in Israel's national history, Moses wrote of me.

And incidentally, let me point out, our Lord did not merely say Moses spoke of me, he said Moses wrote of me. Now when I came up through seminary preparing for the Christian ministry, the Wellhausen and

Tuebingen and other German schools of the rationalistic higher criticism were riding the saddle. And among other things we were told that Moses was just the uncivilized leader of a savage Sinaitic clan.

He could never have written the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, in any case writing wasn't known then. Well all that intellectual higher critical tommyrot has had the bottom knocked out of it. God has used as his battering ram the spade of the archaeologist.

And I was reading only recently about the discovery of a great library 2000 years B.C. in the city of Ewer, where little boy Abram was brought up, just about as far B.C. as we are now A.D. And in that great library 2000 B.C. there's a whole section devoted to the teaching of foreign languages for the facilitating of international trade. 2000 years B.C. Yes, have no doubt about it, Moses wrote of me. And shall I quickly call to your ready recollection how similarly our Lord swung round on those punctilious exegetes of the law known to us as the scribes.

And he said to them, much to their astonishment, ye search the scriptures, and ye do well, for in them ye think ye have the life eternal, and these are they which testify of me. I'm not a bit surprised that they were taken aback. Those erudite doctors of the law had never heard anybody say anything like that before.

Perhaps it may be good to mention this, in case anybody may possibly not know it, but for between 200 and 240 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the authentic canon of the Jewish scriptures had been completed, beginning with the school of Ezra. There had been a classification of all the available documents, and there had been most intense and protracted study of them, and all the doubtful or extraneous documents had been eliminated until finally it was agreed that these were the authentic oracles of Jehovah. And they had been bound together, and for over 200 years the completed authentic Hebrew Bible, which we now call the Old Testament, had been circulating among the Jews.

And not only so, but for 200 years or thereabouts those scriptures had been read in Jewish synagogues all round the Roman world, and they had been read in their characteristic Jewish threefold classification. One, the Torah, or the Law. Two, the Nevi'im, or the Prophets.

And three, the Kethuvim, or the Hagiographer, the Writings, the Law, the Prophets, the Writings. And with one sweep of His omniscient mind, our Lord says, these all of them, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, these are they that testify of Me. Am I laboring this point too long? It's so interesting to myself I never tire of talking about it.

I love anything that exalts Jesus, and the Old Testament certainly does. Let me just mention one other passage, from a literary point of view, one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful little passage in the New Testament, from a very skilled writer, a medical man named Luke. And Luke's Greek is beautiful.

But even in the English, what a delightful little story it is. I'm thinking of Luke chapter 24, his account of the Emmaus walk. He tells us how those two crestfallen men left the Jewish capital, the scene of that utter tragedy.

When Jesus was buried, all their dearest, sweetest, highest hopes were buried with him. And those two crestfallen men left the city, and with leaden footsteps and heavy hearts, they were trudging back to Emmaus, a few miles away, where they lived. And Luke tells us how, unrecognizedly, the risen Jesus joined them.

And Luke says that as they traveled together, Jesus expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. But Luke says more than that, he says, and beginning at Moses. Now he couldn't begin before Moses, because Moses is the beginning.

Beginning at Moses, and going through all the prophets, there are none besides all, he went through all the writings, again there are none besides all, and he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Now, oh brothers and sisters, I would love to have been in on that exposition, wouldn't you? The only thing is, if we'd been there then, we wouldn't have been here now, and it's rather nice to be here now. So, beyond the slightest glimmer of the shadow of a doubt, our Lord taught again and again, in the clearest language, that he was and he is the all-pervading, all-dominating theme of the whole of the Old Testament.

But that isn't all. With equal clarity and definiteness, our wonderful Master taught that he would equally be the dominating theme of the New Testament, before ever the first line of the New Testament was written. I'm sure you must have noticed, in these later chapters of John, from which our originating text was taken, when our Lord begins to apprise the disciples concerning the Paraclete, who was soon to come, even the Holy Spirit, he made three preannouncements which stand out with a kind of Alpine preeminence.

These are they. One, he shall bring to your remembrance all things whatsoever I have said to you. Two, and he shall guide you into all the truth.

And three, he shall show you things to come. Now, do you see how, in those three very prominent preannouncements concerning the Holy Spirit, our Lord has anticipatively covered all the three distinctive territories of the New Testament? The Gospels, the Epistles, the Apocalypse, the book of Revelation. He shall bring to your remembrance, that covers the Gospels.

He shall guide you into all the truth, that covers the New Testament, Epistles, in which the distinctive and foundational truths of the Christian faith are elucidated and given a written fixity for the use of the Church through the present dispensation. And thirdly, he shall show you things to come. That sweeps us on to the last book of the New Testament, the Apocalypse, as we call it, the Greek word meaning an unveiling in which the Holy Spirit has drawn aside somewhat the veil from futurity and has shown us the catastrophic ending of the present age at Armageddon and the sudden appearing in spectacular splendor of our Lord Jesus.

To take the throne of universal empire and he has shown us the millennial kingdom of Jesus and then the winding up of the Adamic order and the gathering of the whole human race at the great white throne of the final judgment and then the bringing in of a new heavens and a new earth and the center of it all, the King and the Bridegroom and the Judge is this wonderful Lord Jesus. All the way through the Holy Spirit is glorifying Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, if I may be permitted reverently to use a common colloquialism, and I do it reverently and I'm sure the Lord will be pleased, don't you think the Holy Spirit has made a good job of him here? Say yes.

Why the Bible is Jesus from beginning to end. In the Old Testament you have the Christ of prophecy. In the Gospels you have the Christ of history.

In the Acts and the Epistles you have the Christ of experience. And in the Apocalypse you have the Christ of coming glory. The Old Testament cries, behold he comes.

The four Gospels put their sad emphasis on, behold he dies. But the Acts of the Apostles follows on with, behold he lives. And the Epistles join the chorus with, behold he saves.

And the Apocalypse completes the Hallelujah chorus with, behold he reigns. That's it, he comes, he dies, he lives, he saves, he reigns. But it's Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus all the way through.

In the Old Testament you have preparation. In the four Gospels you have manifestation. In the Acts of the Apostles you have dissemination.

In the New Testament Epistles you have realization. And in the Apocalypse you have consummation. But it's Jesus, Jesus, Jesus all the way through.

Hmm, I'm only keeping a watch on the watch for this reason. Friends, I could keep on and on on that aspect. We're only just touching the ripples.

But let's leave that there. Have I time now? Let me think. Yes, I think I have.

Take another illustration of this great truth that everything which begins with the Holy Spirit consummates itself in Christ. Take human history. And oh, what a story is the history of Adam's race.

How did human history begin? Well, I'm sure, Mr. Chairman and friends, in a company of this kind at the Philae Convention, I need not start arguing that human history did not begin with the ape, or the worm, or the ooze, or the slime, or that mysterious product of modern scientific invention, the so-called protoplasm. Of course, we're living in a free country. And I hope the dear old Union Jack will always float over a free British people.

And we Christians cannot compel our fellow countrymen to accept our biblical cosmogony. Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast-wind it in either direction.

And we Christians cannot compel our fellow countrymen to accept our biblical cosmogony, the doctrine of direct creation of all things by God. One never knows. It may be there are some friends here this morning who are believers in the evolution theory.

Well, it's your right to believe that, if you will. And I won't argue the matter just here. My problem is whether I can include... If you insist that you come from the anthropoid ape, my problem is whether I can include you when I next say, My dear brethren... No, I think we'll go back to the book.

You know, I wish everybody knew that before Charles Darwin died, he came right back to Jesus. Did you know that? Yes. Well, I say we'll leave that and we'll come back to the book.

How does the Bible begin? It says this, In the beginning God created the heavens, plural, and the earth. Now, in the Hebrew, it is the idiomatic form for the universe. The heavens and the earth.

You know, the Bible is far more scientific than many people think. I know it's not a book of science. And I'm rather tired of being told, Oh, well, of course you can't trust the Bible on scientific matters.

But I seem to notice a preciseness that is very remarkable when the Bible is dealing with physical phenomena. Have you noticed when the Hebrew means the universe, it says the heavens and the earth. But when it means our own solar system, it says the earth and the heavens.

Have you noticed that? Anyway, here it is, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the universe. And then right from the great big vast general statement, you come right down to this little planet. Because the Bible is principally concerned with this earth.

And the earth was without form and void. I'm one of those who prefer to read it, and the earth became. I mustn't take too long on that.

But you see, the very word bara, the Hebrew, that we translate create, means to fashion beautifully. And it's difficult to think that God beautifully fashioned a thing without form and void. I won't go into that.

I once went right through the Hebrew of the Old Testament, looking at every occurrence of the verb to be, that we translate as was, the earth was. And one thing is very clear, it is never static. It indicates sequence.

The earth became without form and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep. But now there's going to be a new beginning, and how does the new beginning begin? This is how it begins.

The spirit of God, the spirit. The spirit of God brooded. And when man was created, how did he become a living soul? God breathed.

Again, it's one of the words used of the spirit. Let us never forget, human history began with the brooding and breathing spirit. And just because human history began with the spirit, by divine necessity, human history must consummate itself with the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on the throne of universal government.

To quote the philosopher poet Tennyson, that is the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. My one point of respectful divergence from the brilliant Tennyson is that what he calls the one far-off divine event, I believe is now probably nearer than the most sanguine minded among us is daring to suspect. I believe that the return of our Lord Jesus in second advent royalty is soon to happen.

Don't you? I almost feel like adding, judging from the modern evolution of events, if he doesn't come soon, God help us all. Look, I mustn't get into prophetic matters. If we start getting into matters dispensational and prophetic and eschatological, oh, the Pilate convention may soon become without form and void and darkness on the face of the chairman.

In any case, when it comes to matters of, get ready you who don't like big words, let me tantalize you. When it comes to matters of eschatological prognostication, I would sooner say much too little than a little too much. But I will just touch on one aspect only.

I think of that remarkable dream that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed and then, bless the cockles of his heart, he went and forgot. And he had the most absurd idea that somebody must interpret to him a dream that he couldn't remember himself. Well, you know how Daniel brought back the dream and then told him the meaning.

Thou art the head of gold. Then you have the chest and the arms of silver. The wide-spreading empire of media Persia.

Then you have the trunk of brass. The empire, the meteorically swift-rising empire of Alexander the Great. Then you have the thighs and the legs of iron.

The Roman Empire. Terminating in the feet, part of clay and part of iron, or rather part of pot and part of iron, which would not mix. Now, from Daniel, we know that that is the delineation of that dream image.

And it raises the question, when did Nebuchadnezzar, the golden head, when did Nebuchadnezzar begin to reign? Well, of course, now we know. Nebuchadnezzar began to reign in 605 BC. He was away on a military expedition with some of his leading generals when he got word that his father Nabopolassar had sickened and died.

So Nebuchadnezzar, leaving the campaign in the hands of his commanders, hastened back to the city of Babylon, and he was crowned emperor there in 605 BC. Well, you have the head of gold, then chest and arms of silver, Media Persia, then the trunk of brass, the Alexandrian Empire, and then the legs of iron, the Empire of Rome. Why two iron legs? You don't need me to tell you.

The Roman Empire divided into two. The Eastern Empire, with its capital at Byzantium, or Constantinople, and the Western Empire, with its capital, Rome. Now, I can't see your dear faces very well in this obscure light, but I think I can see you all look intelligent enough to know the date when the Roman Empire divided into those two legs.

Do you remember the date? In the words of Paul, brethren, I stand in doubt of you. It was in 395 AD. Now, all I'm saying is, and nobody can quarrel with this, from 605 BC to 395 AD in popular chronology is exactly a thousand years.

And if it's a thousand years from that head of gold to the dividing of the Roman Empire into the East and the West, you only have to put the figure of a human anatomy on a piece of paper and look at it to know that today we must be somewhere in the region of the feet and the toes. That's all I'm going to say. You dare to disagree.

And don't you bring that up this afternoon. And when you look round, all the precursors, the signs, the promised indications of the Lord's coming, they're here. And I believe He is coming soon.

And when He does, what's the biggest thing of all that's going to happen? It's this. God says that when that glorious, greater Son of David sits on the throne of universal dominion, then I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. And as soon as the Holy Spirit has put Jesus on the throne, He'll come and He'll flood the human race with His wonderful presence.

Are you following? He shall glorify Me. That's it. Time for another look at the watch.

Yes, I don't want to miss the plane back to California. No, I'll shut the Bible to let you know I'm almost through. But listen, I cannot let you slip out of my clutches this morning without bringing all this down to a practical issue.

He shall glorify Me. If that is true, and it is, then, Mr. Chairman and friends, here we have the acid test of every movement, of every ministry, and of every Christian believer. I mean this.

When we want to know whether a movement is of the Holy Spirit or not, our first question is not how intellectual is it. Does it enable you to work miracles, even to raise the dead? No. All such questions come later.

The first question is, what place does that movement give to him? I remember years ago, when my Ethel and I lived in Britain, I got into the train at Crewe, Cheshire, on my way to London. And the person who had occupied the seat where I now sat had left, either accidentally or purposefully, the current issue of a widely read Spiritist magazine. And in the editorial I read, among other weird, wild, wonderful things, I read this.

The man Jesus is now an advanced medium operating in the invisible realm on the fourth stratum. That's most informing, isn't it? The man Jesus is now an advanced medium operating in the invisible realm on the fourth stratum. Well, is that true or false? Let's apply the test.

Where does the Holy Spirit put him? I think of a passage in Ephesians. That ye may know the power of God to a sward who believe, even the working of the might of his power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly spheres, far above all principality and power and authority and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come, and hath put all things under his feet, including the sixth, the fourth stratum. I nearly put him too higher.

Everything beneath him, nothing above him. That's where the Holy Spirit has put him. Very well, is that movement of the Holy Spirit.

We're not just being bigots. We're simply being true to truth when we say, no, it's of the devil. I almost wrote a letter to the editor but I didn't know how to address one to Satan.

And similarly, this is the test of every ministry. This is how you must test my ministry. This is how you must test the ministry of Philae.

What place does my ministry give to him? What place does Philae give to him? Mr. Chairman, Mr. Duncan, I can never forget some penetrating words of the late Dr. James Denny, than whom the Presbyterian Church of Scotland never produced a finer theologian, in my judgment. And in his high-pitched voice he said to a group of young men going out after ministerial training to their first pastorates, I think I've got him almost verbatim, he said, young men, never forget this, no minister of the gospel can be continually giving the impression that he himself is clever and at the same time truly preach Christ. Hmm, that should make any minister think.

But now, your dear selves, each one of us as individuals, this is the test. He shall glorify me. The first and deepest going test of you and of me as Christian believers is how much of Jesus is seen in you and me.

Did anybody here ever hear that seraphic British preacher, the late Dr. F.B. Meyer? Did you hear him? Oh, there never was a preacher like F.B. Meyer. Hands up anybody who heard Dr. Meyer. Yes.

Oh, what a man he was. And one of his well-known sayings was this. He would say, you know, my friends, in all born-again Christians, Jesus is present, because if any man had not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

He would say, yes, in all Christians, Jesus is present. Then he would say, but in some, he's not only present, he is prominent. And after a pause he would add, and in some, alas, not many, but it ought to be true of all.

He is not only present and not only prominent, he is preeminent. Where do you fit, Mr. Preacher, where do you fit? Present, prominent, preeminent. On Sunday morning, I quoted that lovely little poemette written by Beatrice Cleland as a tribute to the person who led her to the Savior.

But in so doing, she has expressed in the most artlessly beautiful way what happens when Christ by the Holy Spirit really fills us. And this is what happens when the Holy Spirit does have the complete control of us. Miss Cleland says this, Not only by the words you say, not only in your deeds confessed, but in the most unconscious ways is Christ expressed.

Is it a beatific smile or a holy light upon your brow? Oh no, I felt his presence when you laughed just now. For me it was not the truth you taught. To you so clear, to me so dim.

But when you came to me, you brought a sense of him. And from your eyes he beckons me, and from your lips his love is shed, till I lose sight of you and see the Christ instead. Brothers and sisters, that is the biggest and loveliest evidence of the Spirit-filled heart and mind.

We lose sight of self, and in all that we say and do, somehow, Jesus is seen. He shall glorify me. I must stop because I've gone over the time this morning.

I've only dared to do it because it's the last morning and you can't do anything about it. But I'm through except, dear brothers and sisters, let our final prayer in these Bible readings be this. Break through my nature, mighty heavenly love.

Clear every avenue of thought and brain. Flood my affections, purify my will. Let nothing but thine own pure life remain.

Thus wholly mastered and by thee possessed, forth from my life, spontaneous and free, shall flow a stream of tenderness and grace, loving because thy love lives through me. And when the Holy Spirit really gets us, that's the lovely miracle that always happens. He shall glorify me.

Shall we pray? Dear Master, without any imagining of what may happen when the Spirit fills our hearts, and without any waiting for emotional stirrings, in a deeply reverent, thoughtful way, once again may we get to thy dear feet in utter surrender. Teach us more and more the reality of this heavenly infilling, and grant that when we leave here today or tomorrow, we may go back to our churches and homes and areas, Christ-centered and Christ-communicating. And now may our Father's love and the Savior's grace and the heavenly Spirit's comforts be with all of us until at last we see the King face to face.

Amen.

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