

The Case for Jesus Christ as Your Savior

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4 **Graham F. Watts, Sr.**

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6 **VISION:** To hear the midnight cry, "The bridegroom comes, go out to meet
7 Him" (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1
8 John 3:2).

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10 **MISSION:** Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3) to be glad,
11 to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the
12 Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

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14 **VALUES:** Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without
15 fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in
16 heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb's fine, clean and
17 white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk
18 humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

19

20 **OVERALL AIM:** Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to
21 inquiring minds to prompt the following inquiries: "Are our feet on
22 the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the
23 Father" (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with
24 Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

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26 **PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY**

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28 This study examines the human condition that makes Christ essential.

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30 **OBJECTIVES/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH/THESIS**

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32 At the end of this study, the reader has the opportunity to reconcile
33 whether s/he is basically good and does not need Jesus Christ or
34 whether s/he has a compromised nature that requires Christ's help!

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37 **SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT**

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39 Pilate's inquiry about Jesus is relevant today! He asked: "What
40 shall I do with Jesus [who] is called Christ" (Matthew 27:22)? The
41 ancient multitude said: "...Away with Him..." (John 19:15). It is
42 doubtful whether modern people are more accepting of Christ.

43
44 **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

45
46 Let us examine one way of setting aside Christ! An old debate
47 between Thomas Hobbes and Jean Jacques Rousseau serves as a
48 reasonable illustration. In their opposing views on the nature of
49 humanity, Hobbes suggested that "...authority is necessary... to prevent
50 civil chaos" (http://issuepedia.org/Humans_are_good). His conclusion
51 rests on the premise that humans are NOT basically good. But
52 Rousseau "...argued that man is good by nature but corrupted by
53 society..." (http://issuepedia.org/Humans_are_good). And the innate
54 goodness movement suggests that "...human beings... have the potential to
55 become happy and nice people... [and all that is needed is] to... promote
56 the positive and useful sides and try to reduce the negative sides"
57 ([http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=23](http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=2383)
58 83). The field of positive psychology, "...founded on the beliefs that
59 people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate
60 what is best within [them], and to enhance their experiences of love,
61 work and play..." (<http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/>) has emerged to

62 advance innate human goodness despite the Scriptures' claim that
63 "most men will proclaim each his own goodness" (Proverbs 20:6, NKJV)
64 when "...only God is truly good" (Mark 10:18, NLT). This background
65 provided the impetus for the study question that follows.

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67 **STUDY QUESTION**

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69 What is the biblical position on the nature of humanity?

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71 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

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73 **1. Human nature is fallen!** Friends of creation recognize that humans
74 were originally created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27 & 5:1-
75 2) and the first couple, as they came from the hand of God, was
76 good (Genesis 1:31). Although the first couple lived in a perfect
77 society (Genesis 2:8, 15, 18, 21-22), law was central to happiness,
78 and obedience to law was the rent or mortgage payment for
79 occupation in Eden (Genesis 2:9 & 16), until disobedience--the
80 default on payment--led to eviction (Genesis 3:1-13 & 22-24; 1
81 Timothy 2:14). The action of the first couple introduced sin to
82 the human genetic code (Romans 5:12) and compromised human nature
83 (Romans 3:23), and each descendant of Adam has inherited a legacy
84 of a fallen, sinful nature (Psalm 51:5), which produces "...all
85 manner of evil desire" (Romans 7:8, NKJV; Psalm 52:2-3) in those
86 who are "...sold under sin" (Romans 7:14, NKJV). Hence, an inner
87 conflict permeates the lives of human beings. Paul described that
88 inner conflict this way: "I don't do what I want to do; instead, I
89 do what I hate to do; ...I keep on doing the evil things I don't want
90 to do" (Romans 7:15 & 19, TNIV), which happens because sin lives
91 within (Romans 7:20). Sin holds human beings hostage, as strangers
92 to goodness and this captivity is at the heart of crime and other
93 human injustices, which keep judicial, law-enforcement and
94 healthcare systems busy around the globe.

95

96 2. **Human nature is not self-improving!** Paul, in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NIRV,
97 described the temporal decline of human goodness this way:

98 ...There will be terrible times in the last days. People will
99 love themselves. They will love money. They will brag and be
100 proud. They will tear others down. They will not obey their
101 parents. They won't be thankful or holy. They won't love
102 others. They won't forgive others. They will tell lies about
103 people. They will be out of control. They will be wild. They
104 will hate what is good. They will turn against their friends.
105 They will act without thinking. They will think they are better
106 than others. They will love what pleases them instead of loving
107 God. They will act as if they were serving God. But what they
108 do will show that they have turned their backs on God's power...

109 The irony of this situation is its unregulated capacity to self-
110 perpetuate and self-destroy. The human mind plays tricks on itself;
111 it is self-deceiving (Jeremiah 17:9) so that "...we are not able to
112 plan our own course" (Jeremiah 10:23, NLT); thus, "there is a path
113 before each person that seems right, but it ends in death (Proverbs
114 14:12 & 16:25, NLT). "[And] whoever strays from the path of prudence
115 comes to rest in the company of the dead" (Proverbs 21:16, TNIV).

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118 3. **Human nature even disguises depravity with religiosity!** Ezekiel
119 summarized the duplicity this way: "Son of man, these leaders have
120 set up idols in their hearts. They have embraced things that will
121 make them fall into sin..." (Ezekiel 14:3, NLT). It may be hard to
122 conceive that religious people may themselves, need freedom from
123 sin, but many examples are recorded for our admonition. In the Old
124 Testament, God sent this message: "Tell the people of Israel, 'this
125 is what the Sovereign Lord says: Repent and turn away from your
126 idols and stop all your detestable sins" (Ezekiel 14:6, NLT). And
127 years later, in the New Testament, Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Do not
128 be amazed that I said unto you, 'You must be born again'" (John

129 3:7, NASB). Within religious circles, they "...mock the messengers
 130 of God; ...despise [their] words and misuse His prophets..." (2
 131 Chronicles 36:16 & Isaiah 58:2-3), indicating that a profession of
 132 faith alone is not enough for holiness. The holy record described
 133 some in religious circles who are emboldened in sin, but are
 134 faithful church attendees (Jeremiah 7:8-20). Aaron was right when
 135 he said: God's people as "...prone to evil" (Exodus 32:22). These
 136 examples should not surprise us because Moses predicted that after
 137 his death, the Israelites "...will utterly corrupt [themselves] and
 138 turn aside from [God's] way..." (Deuteronomy 31:29). But Christ is
 139 familiar with the deceivers and has these words in store for them:
 140 "...I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity"
 141 (Matthew 7:23). It is chilling to know that the pseudo-religious
 142 will be included among those who receive the second death sentence
 143 of Matthew 7:23 (Matthew 7:22). The organized church is made up of
 144 a substantive portion of pseudo-religious people (Matthew 25:2).
 145 It is time for the waiting church to ask this question: "...What
 146 shall we do that we might work the works of God?"

147
 148 **4. Human nature is non-conforming!** Two Old Testament writers
 149 described the problem this way: "Thus [said] the Lord unto this
 150 people: ...they loved to wander [and] they have not refrained their
 151 feet" (Jeremiah 14:10). Elsewhere, the same theme was expressed
 152 this way: "All we like sheep have gone astray; each of us has
 153 turned to his own way..." (Isaiah 53:6, NASB). God, through Jeremiah
 154 described the insane excitement with sin this way: "...My people have
 155 committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living
 156 waters to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can
 157 hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13, NASB). Why did this happen?
 158 "...People love... darkness more than... light" (John 3:19 NLT) because
 159 "...[their] sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did
 160 obey God's laws and it never will" (Romans 8:7, NLT). So in the
 161 20th century, when Paul Anka and Frank Sinatra gave us this

162 memorable line in song: "*I faced it all and I stood tall and did it*
 163 *my way,*" they accurately summarized the human condition. But it
 164 was for this very tendency that Christ came and died "...to give His
 165 life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28) that human beings might be
 166 "...reconciled to God... [and... be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10; 2
 167 Corinthians 5:18; 1 John 2:2 & 4:10). "...God was in Christ
 168 reconciling the world unto [Him]..." (2 Corinthians 5:19) that "...the
 169 riches of His goodness,...forbearance and longsuffering... [would lead
 170 people] to repentance" (Romans 2:4). Indeed, "...God so loved the
 171 world that He gave His only... Son that whoever believes in Him
 172 shall... have eternal life" (John 3:16, NASB) and "...on such the
 173 second death has no power..." (Revelation 20:6 & 2:11). In other
 174 words, Christ will resurrect and transform those who come up in the
 175 first resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:14-19 & 1 Corinthians 15:51-
 176 55). And to accomplish this, Christ came to break the cycle of
 177 non-conformity to God that human life might "...produce what is
 178 completely good, right and true" (Ephesians 5:9, NIRV), but for
 179 this to happen, the "...stubborn-hearted, who are far from
 180 righteousness [must listen to Jesus Christ]" (Isaiah 46:12, NKJV).

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 182
 183 **5. Human nature, though compromised by sin, is amenable!** So external
 184 help has been a catalyst for redemption. For instance, "...in the
 185 fourth year of Jehoiakim, ...king of Judah," Jeremiah wrote the
 186 woes that God contemplated against Israel, Judah and surrounding
 187 nations. In God's plan, He hoped "...that the people of Judah will
 188 repent when they hear again all the terrible things [He has]...
 189 planned for them. Then [God] will be able to forgive their sins
 190 and wrongdoings" (Jeremiah 36:1-3, NLT). The backdrop of this
 191 action was "...the wicked things Manasseh had done to provoke [God
 192 (2 Kings 21:1-9), so] God planned to "...banish Judah from [His]
 193 presence just as [He had] banished Israel. And [with this exile
 194 also came the threat to] reject... [the] city of Jerusalem and the

195 Temple where [God's] name was to be honored" (2 Kings 23:26-27).
 196 But destruction of sinful people is NOT God's primary agenda for He
 197 takes "...NO pleasure in the death of the wicked. God wants the
 198 wicked to turn from [their evil] ways and live (Ezekiel 33:11),
 199 both temporally and eternally. Micah captured the character of God
 200 this way: "Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing
 201 over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not
 202 retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy" (Micah
 203 7:18, NKJV). Thus, God calls to humanity with words like these:
 204 "Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your
 205 deeds..." (Jeremiah 25:5, NASB). These actions are possible
 206 because in the incarnation, Jesus Christ saved God's people from
 207 their sins (Matthew 1:21) by giving them power (John 1:12) so that
 208 they are no longer obligated to do what their sinful nature urges
 209 (Romans 8:12, NLT).

210

211 **6. Human nature clings to sin at its own peril!** The Bible's Old
 212 Testament prophets repeatedly communicated the folly of continuing
 213 in sin. In Hosea's day, God had this to say about His people:
 214 "Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God for the
 215 spirit of whoredom, [that is, backsliding (Jeremiah 8:5; 14:7 &
 216 6:16; Hosea 4:16 & 11:7)], is within them and they know not the
 217 Lord" (Hosea 5:4, English Standard Version). In Jeremiah's day, a
 218 similar message went out: "This is what the Lord says to His
 219 people: 'You love to wander far from me and do not restrain
 220 yourselves; therefore, I will no longer accept you as my people.
 221 Now I will remember all your wickedness and will punish you for
 222 your sins'" (Jeremiah 14:10, NLT & Zephaniah 1:17). "...The Lord
 223 watches a man's ways. He studies all of His paths. A sinner is
 224 trapped by his own evil acts. He is held tight by the ropes of his
 225 sins. He will die because he refused to be corrected. His sins
 226 will capture him because he was very foolish" (Proverbs 5:21-23,

227 NIRV). But the legacy of entrapment in sin can be broken through
 228 Jesus Christ, for "all souls [belong to God]" (Ezekiel 18:4).
 229 "[And God] will heal... backsliding..." (Hosea 14:4) if His
 230 "...backsliding children [return unto Him]" (Jeremiah 3:22). God's
 231 desire for this reunion is expressed in this message: "Turn, O
 232 backsliding children, ...for I am married unto you..." (Jeremiah
 233 3:14). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself..."
 234 (2 Corinthians 5:19); therefore, in the spirit of reconciliation,
 235 "if [God's children], who are called by [His] name, will humble
 236 themselves and pray and seek [His] face and turn from their wicked
 237 ways, then [He] will hear from heaven, ... forgive their sin and
 238 will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14, TNIV). None should
 239 remain captive to sin and its awful consequences (Amos 9:10; Romans
 240 6:23) "...for Christ [has already] died for our sins..." (1
 241 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 5:8) and has set us free from sin (John
 242 8:36) and the urgings of our sinful nature (Romans 8:12, NLT).

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245 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: In this study, we examined the human condition
 246 that makes Christ essential. The question that focused the study
 247 asked: What is the biblical position on the nature of humanity? Key
 248 discussion points were as follows: 1) Human nature is fallen; 2)
 249 Human nature is not self-improving; 3) Human nature even disguises
 250 depravity with religiosity; 4) Human nature is non-conforming; 5)
 251 Human nature, though compromised by sin, is amenable and 6) Human
 252 nature clings to sin at its own peril. What value does this study
 253 add to the on-going discourse on the case for Jesus Christ in the
 254 lives of humanity? The studies in my series have acknowledged that
 255 it is of little redeeming value to engage in Bible Study merely for
 256 information; therefore, subsequent paragraphs make a practical
 257 application of the role of Christ in addressing the human condition.

258

259 **DISCUSSION: WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?**

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261 The Bible offers an alternative view of human nature and presents a
 262 solution to address the state of humanity. People need repentance,
 263 baptism, the Holy Spirit's power and new life (that is: new
 264 direction, motivation and purpose) from God for deliverance from the
 265 constant urges of the sinful nature (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:1, 5, 9 &
 266 11, NLT; John 1:12 & 6:33 & Romans 8:11). And those who accept and
 267 cooperate with God's rescue plan carried out through the ministry of
 268 Jesus Christ discover that they "...receive... power to become
 269 [children] of God" (John 1:12 & Galatians 3:26). And as children,
 270 they "...have no obligation to do what [the] sinful nature urges..."
 271 (Romans 8:12, NLT), which is a significant improvement over
 272 compulsion to do wrong, despite knowing what is wrong (Romans 7:15).
 273 In redemption, Jesus Christ offers the "...goodness of God [that]
 274 leads... to repentance" (Romans 2:4). And through the Holy Spirit,
 275 Christ reproduces "...the fruit of the Spirit--love, joy, peace,
 276 [patience], gentleness, goodness [and] faith--" (Galatians 5:22) in
 277 the lives of those who accept and obey His word. The Scriptures are
 278 clear: "The Word of God is at work in them that believe..." (1
 279 Thessalonians 2:13) and as a two-edged sword, the cutting of the Word
 280 (Hebrews 4:12) makes it possible for people to purify their souls by
 281 obeying God's truth through the indwelling, Holy Spirit (1 Peter
 282 1:22). Notice the emphasis here: those who have the Holy Spirit, in
 283 fulfillment of Christ's promise to send the comforter (John 14:26;
 284 15:26 & 16:7), develop capacity to do what pleases God (Philippians
 285 4:13). In contrast, "...people who aren't spiritual can't receive
 286 truth from God's Spirit; it... sounds foolish to them and they can't
 287 understand it..." (1 Corinthians 2:14, NLT). However, those who
 288 "...have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16) "...set [their]
 289 sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of
 290 honor at God's right hand" (Colossians 3:1, NLT).

291

292 CONCLUSIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

293
 294 Strength is available from God to do all good things through Jesus
 295 Christ (Philippians 4:13). "...Joyful are those who have the God of
 296 Israel, [the God of overcomers (Revelation 3:5)], as their helper..."
 297 (Psalm 146:5, NLT); they will "bring forth... fruits worthy of
 298 repentance... (Luke 3:8) and turn to God (Acts 26:20). Heaven
 299 rejoices each time one sinner repents (Luke 15:7) and God works in
 300 the lives of repentant people "...to do... His good pleasure"
 301 (Philippians 2:13). In fact, after repentance and baptism, heaven
 302 has a system for retention in holiness and this system is described
 303 in Jude 24; Hebrews 4:16; 6:1 & 4-6; 7:25; 8:1 and 1 John 1:9. You
 304 should spend time studying that system because God established it so
 305 that those who have been "...washed from... sins [through the] blood
 306 [of Christ]" (Revelation 1:5) no longer comes under the control of
 307 sin (Romans 6:14). In other words, one cannot keep on sinning
 308 intentionally who lives and walks after the leading of the Holy
 309 Spirit (Isaiah 30:21; Romans 6:1-2 & 14; Galatians 5:16 & 25). This
 310 victory is guaranteed because God's word says: "If the Son therefore
 311 shall make you free, [you] shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). And
 312 the utterance of God's word "...always produces fruit; it
 313 accomplishes all [God wants]..." (Isaiah 55:11, NLT).

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315 CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?

316
 317 We are on the very borders of the eternal world (This Day With God,
 318 {TDG} 117.1). Evaluate yourself and make a decision about Jesus
 319 Christ. If sin rules your life and you are unhappy with the results,
 320 and you want release, then turn to God! You shall seek [Him] and
 321 find [Him] when you turn to [Him] with all your heart and He will
 322 turn away your captivity from slavery to sin (Jeremiah 29:13-14) for
 323 "...anyone who belongs to Christ... becomes a new person; the old

324 life is gone--[it does not linger around to influence your current
325 life course when]-- new life, [in Christ] has begun" (2 Corinthians
326 5:17, NLT) for Christ lives in you (Galatians 2:20) through His Holy
327 Spirit, who quickens your mortal body (Romans 8:11).

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329
330 A new experience awaits you. Once "...you have been raised to new
331 life with Christ, [you will] set your sights on the realities of
332 heaven...; think about the things of heaven... [and] put to death the
333 sinful, earthly things lurking within you. [You will] have nothing
334 to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust and evil desires. [You
335 will] get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander and dirty
336 language. [You will not] lie to each other for you have been
337 stripped of your old sinful nature. [You will] put on your new
338 nature and be renewed [in mind] as you learn to know your Creator and
339 become like Him. Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves,
340 you [will] clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness,
341 humility, gentleness and patience [and] make allowance for each
342 other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you [because you will]
343 remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. [And]
344 above all, [you will] clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all
345 together in perfect harmony and let the peace that comes from Christ
346 rule in your hearts for as members of one body you are called to live
347 in peace. [You will also] be thankful. In this new life, it [will
348 not] matter [whether] you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or
349 uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave or free. Christ is all
350 that matters and He [will live] in all of us" (Colossians 3:1-2,5,8-
351 10, 12-15 & 11, NLT) who accept Him by faith (Ephesians 3:17) and He
352 will "...keep us from falling... [into sin]" (Jude 24).