**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***Ekklesia Series***

***Resurrection Day***

***It is all About God***

 **April 21st, In the Year of Our Lord 2019**

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**(Unless otherwise noted, NAU text is quoted)**

 Life is a miracle. We have the Biblical account of Life’s creation. The account is a miracle beyond the understanding of modern science. Through all man’s scientific knowledge to date, no one knows how life got started here, on this third rock from the Sun. Scientists do tell us that our positioning as the third orb from the Sun places earth in just the right orbit to have a physical environment for life. Looking the other way, we see the much larger planet, Jupiter, which blocks large meteors and space objects from colliding into earth (more than they do) that would destroy earth’s atmosphere. Thus, extinguishing the life that was created here.

Today is a miracle. We are here. We do not understand all things that have happened on earth. However, history tells us that it is a miracle for mankind to have survived to this place in time. Without some kind of order to preserve life, people turn-in on themselves and self-destruct. We have the Bible that tells us God’s intent for all of us. This has not changed. The sad fact is that many people have chosen to violate the Creator’s plan for life. The Bible provides for us a base-line for conduct and how to have a relationship with God and our neighbor and how not to have one. Before the Bible was in existence, we are told that God revealed Himself through the creation. It is innate in all humans to love and respect their neighbor. This is a choice. The ability to love and respect our neighbor starts with a respectful humility towards God our Creator. Not all people refer to the power that created them as their Creator, but they have the opportunity to acknowledge a power greater than themselves. The Apostle Paul tells us this in Romans 1.

God has interacted in His Creation from the beginning. When things got really bad, He destroyed all but a few lives. We see this in the Noah-flood account. Man had chosen to live a life away from God. When we see this in our own time, wars take place. One or more national authorities (WWII Allied Forces) sees to it that the offending group is removed from the planet (or large portion of their population) as in America dropping Atomic bombs in WWII. The Japanese went too far. There was judgement. The point being that man left to himself will destroy himself. In Noah’s day, God stepped in. But there was a remnant, Noah and family. And life goes on.

**We record time** in our present calendar to be two-thousand & nine-teen-hundred years from the date of the birth of Jesus Christ. Setting aside our calendar’s accuracy, that may be off four to six years based upon the reign of Herod, we can safely say that it has been about 2000 years from the Incarnation of God, known, to this day, by the name Jesus. God’s earthly life lasted about thirty-three and one-half years. At that point, fallen man, **that is all of us**, represented by the Jewish and Roman leaders, said they had enough. So, they crucified God in the flesh, because they had made a decision that they were their own gods.

The Gospel of John witnesses to us in the first chapter that the Word is God, who was in the beginning and all things were created through Him and then in time, God as the Word, became flesh and lived with us as one of us. In the providence of God, the incarnation took place for one simple reason.

God so loved the World.

But wait. . .there is more. Due to His great love

God gave His only begotten Son,

 This statement is made to fulfill the prophecies about the Son of Man which is a Messianic title. Identifying Jesus as God’s Son does not mean the same thing as a biological son. “Son” is a Messianic title. It is also the understanding in Jewish Prophecy that brings to light the title “Son” in God’s judgement of Israel, as we will examine today. John 3:16 goes on to say. . .

that whoever believes in Him shall not perish,

but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The eternal tie to God for people is through **faith/belief**. This is as mathematical as two plus two equals four. Surrendered **heart-felt** faith to God equals eternal life. God + Faith = Eternal life. This is the internal change in a person that has direct consequences in this life and eternal life. John 3:16 is the summation of all that is. This one verse encompasses God, Love, the World, sacrificial giving, faith and Eternal life. The statement is complete “grace.” God is the author of grace and love.

However, the title the Hebrews were looking for is Messiah. The man who would rise to the top of their political world and defeat all their enemies. They were not, and to this are not, looking for the Messiah that dies on a cross for the sins of the world. Thereby, supplanting the sacrificial system. Where is one book in the Bible that states this fact? Read the book of Hebrews. It is in the New Testament.

Taking a closer look at the title “Son of Man”, we can learn a great lesson. Remember, the identity of the “Son” is used in John 3:16 by Jesus himself.

**Who did Jesus say that He was?**

Jesus often referred to Himself as “The Son of Man”.

This self-designation, “The Son of Man” by Jesus, is worthy of discussion. In all four Gospels, the phrase can be found. If you have a computer and can do a search for the title, you will find that it is used about 80 times. Except for John 12:34, where the crowd refers to Jesus as the Son of Man, Jesus speaks this term himself. We find an Old Testament reference. In Acts 7:55, 56, Stephen uses the term.

 55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

We observe that the prophet Ezekiel uses the title ‘Son of Man’ as God addressed him. Reading Ezekiel, we see that God is pronouncing judgement upon Israel for being a rebellious people. This is at the beginning of the time of the Babylonian conquest (605 -586 B.C.). The deportation had already started. The Hebrew time in Babylon is referred to as the “Babylonian Captivity” of 70 years. This is when Solomon’s Temple was destroyed (587 B.C.). However, after a time, the Persian King Cyrus, defeats the Babylonians by 536 B.C. and issues a decree for the Jews to return to the Promise Land and rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1.) By 515 B.C., Zerubbabel rebuilt and dedicated the Temple.
 Jesus constantly corrects the religious leaders like Ezekiel did. God called Ezekiel the “Son of Man.” There is no doubt, due to the knowledge of the Prophets by the religious leaders in Jesus’ day, that they knew very well, God addresses Ezekiel with the title Son of Man. God then directed Ezekiel to pronounce judgment and condemnation on Israel. This had to be stinging in their ears. When Jesus pronounced judgement upon the Jewish leaders, especially those in charge of the Temple, that not one stone will be left, they knew Jesus was a problem for them. The last time the Temple was destroyed was 587 years by the Babylonians. The Jews were occupied by the Romans in Jesus’ day. The Jewish leaders charged Jesus with wanting to destroy the Temple as part of the effort to convict Him of crimes in order to crucify Him.

**John 2:19-25**

**19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."**

 **20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"**

 **21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.**

 **22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.**

 **23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.**

 **24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,**

 **25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.**

**Luke 21:6** "These things that you see the days will come when not one stone will be left on another that will not be thrown down."

**Micah 3:12** Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become ruins, and the temple's mountain will be a high thicket.

**Luke 19:44** They will crush you and your children among you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in your midst, because you did not recognize the time when God visited you.

**Mark 13:2** Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another all will be thrown down."

**Matthew 24:1-2** Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2 And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

**Jesus raises His Temple (His Body) in Three days.**

 60 They did not find *any*, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on, two came forward 61 and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" (Matt. 26:60-61)

**Matthew. 27:40** and saying, "You who *are going to* destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

**Mark 14:58** "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'"

**Mark 15:29** Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who *are going to* destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

**Luke 19:47** And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,

**John 2:19** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

**1 Corinthians 3:17** If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

**Son of Man citations in book of Ezekiel**

 **Ezekiel 2:1-7** 1Then He said to me, "**Son of man**, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!"

 2 As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard *Him* speaking to me.

 3 Then He said to me, "**Son of man**, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.

 4 "I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'

 5 "As for them, whether they listen or not-- for they are a rebellious house-- they will know that a prophet has been among them.

 6 "And you, **son of man**, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house.

 7 "But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.

In Daniel 7:13-14, we also find the term.

13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

 The Biblical Scholar and Theologian Millard Erickson makes the observation that there are three roles of the Son of Man:

Servant, Suffering, and Return.

Through this study, it can be determined that the title “**Son of Man**” can be assigned to three categories.

1. A **servant** role on earth.

Matthew 9:6, 12:28; Mark 2:10, 2:28; Luke 5:24, 6:5

1. **Suffer, die and rise** from the dead.

Mark 8:31, 9:9,31, 10:33,34; Luke 9:22,44, 18:31-33; Matthew 17:19, 22-23, 20:18-19

1. **Return** in Eschatological glory.

Matthew16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26

Reference: Millard Erickson, “The Word Became Flesh”

(Baker Book House Company 1991; page 18,19; ISBN 0-8010-3208-3)

Anyone, after reviewing Jesus’ self-designations in the Bible, can easily conclude that Jesus is proclaiming that He is the long-awaited Messiah and is fulfilling Old Testament Scripture.

Erikson continues the study with an examination of the phrase “**Son of God.”** This title is used in Mark 1:1, 15:39. Notable use of the address is by Satan in Matthew 4 during the test in “The Test in The Wilderness.” In Mark 3:11, the evil spirts refer to Jesus as the Son of God.

The “**Son of God”** designation combined with the “**Son of Man”** leaves no doubt that Jesus is the incarnation of God as prophesied in the Old Testament. It should be seen that the role of the Messiah is one of judgement. This includes judgement on the Jews. This is what Ezekiel did. The context of Jesus’ statement that He did not come to judge the world is a direct reference to the events at the end of times as described in the Revelation at the Great White Throne Judgement (Revelation 20:11). However, Jesus made judgements upon people all through His ministry time. This is especially true in dealing with the religious leaders as seen in Matthew 23.

 These titles only provide part of the understanding concerning why God is successful with His incarnation mission. What about God’s human side? God could not have come as just God. How was He then going to model to us that we could be indwelled by His Spirit. Jesus demonstrated

 **God was also one of us in that He contained full humanity as Jesus but did not sin.** From the Gospel accounts, we see that Jesus was birthed into the world just like we were. He grew-up in a common family of His day; they were of the working-class people. Jesus’ earthly parents took Him to the Temple on a yearly basis as was the custom of the community. Like many of us, Jesus grew-up attending spiritual services in His local community. Jesus saw the world around Him. He, no doubt, made observations of the Roman occupation.

1. God, as Jesus, lived the perfect path to gain eternal life. Perfect humility and sacrificial life to God exampled in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36ff).
2. God, as Jesus, taught that He was the Way to the Truth to Eternal Life (John 14:6).
3. God incarnated Himself to be one of us to pay the price for sin.
4. God, as Jesus, defeated sin and death by rising from the dead proving that life exists beyond our body’s ability to sustain life.
5. God, as Jesus, lived among sin, before and after the Cross, and still was victorious. Jesus lived a sinless life (1 Peter 2:22; 1 John3:5).
6. God, as Jesus, spiritually empowered people to go forth in His name with His exclusive eternal life plan. We call this plan Salvation (John 20:19ff).
7. God, as Jesus, will bring an end to this world as we know it.

 He will bring an end to sin and death and separate for an eternity those who love and those who hate (Revelation 20:11ff).

So, the miracle of the Cross, the Resurrection, the Empty Tomb, the Resurrection-appearance and the Ascension...what about these historical events? We have the eyewitness accounts in the Gospels that were written within the lifetimes of the men who witnessed Jesus.

 We have the women, who in the 1st century culture of Judaism were not considered trustworthy, but God used them as witnesses. This makes the account all the more believable. The Jews who wrote the account of the Empty Tomb surely would have not used women because they were not viewed as credible? However, the writers told the truth.

We have the Empty Tomb encounter story that the soldiers were bribed or they fell asleep. Roman soldiers could be executed if either one of these were true.

We have the several resurrection accounts by the Apostles witnessing additional teaching by Jesus. These accounts inspired to Apostles to return to the very Temple in Jerusalem, under the watchful-eye of the Temple Priest and Roman authorities, on the day of Pentecost. This Holy Spirit energizing (additional empowerment) and preach in Jesus’ name.

 These same Apostles who were confused and would not acknowledge knowing Jesus at his trial. Peter in particular denied Jesus three times, and the cock crowed for all the world to hear.

Then there is the restoration of Peter. Jesus sends him out to love His Sheep and feed them. Peter then goes to the Temple and preaches in the name of Jesus under the threat of death on the Cross himself.

 What happens? Many Jews respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Under humble conviction, they repent and are water-baptized. Many today, if they could also see that they need to, need to respond to the Lord, as those did, who Peter preached to.

The Lord is patiently waiting as He did for you and I. It is a miracle!

AMEN