The Misunderstood Christ

Intro: There are many terms in the Bible by which our Lord is described: “Bright and Morning Star,” the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” and others. Likewise there are many titles given Him today by people who have experienced His soothing balm: “the wonderful Christ,” “the mighty Christ,” “the saving Christ.”

1. But, possibly no term fits Him better than “the misunderstood Christ,” for of all men Jesus was the most misunderstood.

2. Mat. 27:46-47 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.”

3. John 2:18-21 “Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21But he spake of the temple of his body.”

4. Mat. 26:59-62 “Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; 60But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, 61And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62And the high priest arose, and Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?”

a. Misunderstandings have been responsible for some of the world’s greatest tragedies: (friendships destroyed, nations going to war, churches divided) even the death of God’s Son.

b. Let us notice some of the ways in which Christ has been misunderstood.

I. HIS MIRACLES HAVE BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD.

A. The Jewish multitudes thought Christ’s miracles were for the expressed purpose of relieving their human suffering.

1. They failed to understand the purpose for His miracles: to confirm His deity and instill faith.

2. John 11:15 “And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.”

3. Mat. 9:1-6 “And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. 2And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto him, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. 3And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. 4And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? 6But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.”

B. Likewise, men today still misunderstand the purpose and reason for His miracles.

1. Mark 16:20 “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

a. cf. Heb. 2:1-4 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 3For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a
just recompence of reward; 3How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

b. Miracles were to produce faith instead of being the result of faith.

2. John 20:30-31 “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

3. They misunderstand the fact that miracles have ceased.
   a. 1 Cor. 13:8-10 “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”
   (1) Jam. 1:25 “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”
   (2) 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
   b. Acts 8: Philip could not pass miraculous gift to other, only the apostles.
   c. Eph. 4:11-13 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”

II. HIS GOSPEL IS MISUNDERSTOOD.
A. What is His Gospel? 1 Cor. 15:1-4 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"
   1. If men did not misunderstand, they would not try to minimize its importance.
   2. Like the Jews they discredit Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection and the salvation that comes thereby.
   3. Rom. 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

B. Too, they try to discount the terms of salvation by that Gospel because they misunderstand.
   1. They teach salvation by grace only.
   2. They teach salvation by faith only.
III. HIS KINGDOM AND CHURCH ARE MISUNDERSTOOD.

A. The Jews were well acquainted with the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah and His kingdom, and thus they looked for their coming.

1. But they misunderstood that Christ would be King over a spiritual kingdom.
   a. John 18:36 “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”
   b. John 3:1-7 “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? 5Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”
   c. Luke 17:20-21 “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

2. Thus, they rejected Him.

B. That misunderstanding continues today.

1. Men fail to realize that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual and fulfilled in the church.
2. Many fail to realize that the church is not an afterthought with God.
3. To some, the church is nothing more than a social institution.
4. Others consider the church nothing more than a benevolent organization.
5. Few realize that the church houses all the saved of God.

IV. HIS SILENCE IS MISUNDERSTOOD.

A. When Jesus answered nothing before His accusers they misunderstood His silence for an admission of guilt.

B. Even today His silence is grossly misunderstood.

1. Men today believe it is a license to do as they please.
   a. “Where does He say we cannot do thus and so?”
   b. cf. instrumental music.
2. They fail to understand the great Christian principle that we can do only that which the Lord authorizes.
   a. 1 Cor. 4:6 “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”
b. Gal. 1:6-9 “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

c. 1 Pet. 4:11 “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

d. 2 Pet. 1:3 “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”

e. 2 John 9 “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”

f. Rev. 22:18-19 “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Conclusion: Do not misunderstand Christ today, there is no reason to because He has revealed His Will in the New Testament. Obey His Will and be saved by Him.