



Carbon Copy Christians

By: Andrew Lamica

1 Corinthians 11:1

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Carbon Copy Christians

by: Andrew Lamica

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). How many times in our reading of God’s word have we quickly glossed over what the apostle Paul said in this passage? Often times, this verse along with others, fail to receive the meditation and thought which they demand. Many of us have been blessed to hear Scripture on such a regular basis that we allow it to become “old hat.” If the power behind this verse wasn’t enough, Paul also challenged the brethren in Thessalonica (2 Thessalonians 3:7), and in Philippi (Philippians 3:17) to do the very same thing.

Paul wasn’t able to call upon others to follow him because he had a casual relationship with Jesus the Christ; he knew Him and knew Him well. Paul likely knew Jesus Christ more than he knew members of his own family or even himself. Though Paul had a great understanding and knowledge of who Jesus was and what He was about, he never became satisfied with that knowledge. When it came to his relationship with Christ, Paul always desired more (Philippians 3:8-11). If there is a pattern to be followed when it comes to how to imitate Christ the life of Paul is just that. Having the correct understanding of who Christ was caused Paul to be willing to forsake his former life and count it as loss for the privilege of following Him. The idea of “knowing Jesus,” is thrown around quite freely in today’s world without a correct understanding of what it means. Paul knew what it was to follow or “imitate” Jesus so well that others could follow his lead and be following Jesus as well.

What does it mean to imitate Christ and how did Paul do it so well? Imitating Jesus is much more than an acknowledgement that He exists and is who He said He is (James 2:19). You see, this is where much of the world’s idea of following Jesus ends, just

believing and acknowledging His existence. Paul’s idea of imitating Christ was much more than a mere acknowledgement, it was how he lived his life. Today, there are many who view Christianity as an activity rather than a way of living. We have a tendency to compartmentalize our lives and place Christianity within one of neat little compartments rather than allow it to be our mode of living. If we need a model of how to imitate Christ, the life of Paul is a great model for our consideration.

Paul’s life was Christ centered, Christ consumed, and Christ controlled. Consider what Paul said in Philippians 1:21, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” If Paul was going to live on this earth, his life was going to be controlled by the teachings of Jesus Christ. Every aspect of Paul’s life was going to be weighted by the fact that he was following Jesus. His daily actions would be measured against the will of God as well as his thoughts. Christians today are to have the same mindset that Paul did, for as long as we live on this earth, our lives are to reflect that it is Jesus who lives in us. After all, if we are Christians, didn’t we crucify and bury our selves (Galatians 2:20, Romans 6:6, Colossians 2:12)?

There are many in the religious world today who want to say they are imitators of Christ yet they continue to resurrect their old self. Of course, we are not expected to be sinless perfect, if we were none of us would make it (Romans 3:23). However, far too often there are those who claim to wear the name of Christ who are not willing to let go of self. Granted, letting go of, and even burying self is not an easy thing to do, but Jesus never promised following Him would be easy.

Not only was Paul’s life Christ centered, Christ consumed, and Christ controlled, his death was looked at as a reward! Imagine that, Paul looked to his death with a hopeful expectation, not with dread that many of us, even Christians have today! Paul knew and understood if there was no imitation of Christ in life, there was not realization of the reward in death. With Christ, Paul’s life (and ours) was filled with endless hope, without Christ, life is just a hopeless end. Paul knew that living on this earth as an imitator of Christ meant submitting his own will to God. Paul also knew there was a great reward when

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If you haven't noticed already, this issue of the PFP is **EXTREMELY LATE!** The reason is because of something that happens to every one of us, depression. Not the clinical depression that happens to some of us to the point that we have to seek out medical help to alleviate the problem, a condition that is very serious and troubling to some of my brethren. This kind of depression is something that happens to all of us, especially preachers from time to time. You see, over the last month I have felt about as motivated to do anything, not just put together the PFP, as a dead rat. I can't really point to a stressor or anything that brought about this time of absence from my duties but it has been there. So, in order to help myself and my brethren when they reach times like these I did what any preacher would do, I wrote a sermon on it! I thought I would take the time in this issue of the PFP to outline that sermon for you and go over, quickly, a few of the main points that I gleaned from Psalm 102. Here it is!

First off, I know that the "scribal commentary," the short sentences before the psalms in most Bibles, were not inspired by God but the scribal title that was given to Psalm 102 really spoke to me and that is why I decided to use it as the crux of the study that I was writing. Let's read it together, "A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Lord." Isn't that what we're talking about? Some affliction has overtaken you and therefore you feel as though you *can't* do anything that you want to do.

Next, let's go over some of the things the psalmist is feeling during his writing of the psalm at hand. He feels as though his life is a waste of time (v. 3). That's serious, most likely, clinical depression shown in this verse! I don't think I have ever been depressed to the point of thinking my life is pointless but I know some that have and it is a serious thing, and it's exactly what the psalmist was feeling. But that's not all, he also felt heartbroken to the point that he couldn't even eat and because of his lack of appetite his

mind was made weaker, resulting in more depression and more loss of appetite (v. 4-5). I know I've felt that before, I did these past few weeks. You feel as though no food is going to hit "*the spot*" and coming from a person like me, a foodie at heart, that's saying something. Even though a loss of appetite and feeling as though your life is a waste is a horrible thing to try to overcome, it's not all the psalmist was experiencing. He even felt as though he had no one on his side through this trying ordeal (v. 6-7). These things would surely have been a mountain that the writer would have needed help to overcome, but apparently there wasn't anyone to help, or so he thought.

The best part about the psalm comes in verses 12-22 where the psalmist speaks of the One who can help us through anything. The reasons outlined in the chapter are amazing. First, the psalmist professes the truth that God is above time (v. 12), so His ability to know what is going to happen in the future gives Him a clear advantage is helping His children. Next, he points out that God is merciful and pitiful (v. 13), that He is trustworthy (v. 14-16), He is caring of our situations (v. 17, 19, 20) and that He is praiseworthy (v. 21-22). With all of these things available, how can God *not* be able to help us in our times of depression and heartache? The answer is, He is abundantly able. If we turn to Him and His instructions, the Bible, then we will receive the help that we need. Now, don't get me wrong, sometimes other help is needed as well in the form of medical assistance, but one of the first places we need to turn is the Father! We will probably experience horribly difficult times in this life, but this life isn't the important one. He will help us get through it but only if we strive to get through it spiritually too.

The majority of the outline for the sermon was taken from Wayne Jackson's article on this psalm ([click here](#)).

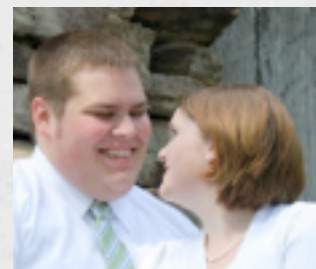
To listen to the sermon preached in its entirety, [click here](#) and select the AM sermon from 7/28/2013.



Upcoming Issues

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December - Robert Hatfield
January - Lee Snow

Lee Snow is the preacher for the Gray Church of Christ in Gray, GA. He is the Editor of the PFP.



this life is over for those who lived in such a way as to imitate Christ (2 Timothy 4:7-8). What a blessed way of living it must be to have the peace of knowing at the end of life there is a great reward waiting on us! There can be little doubt that regardless of Paul's situation in life, he experienced joy which abounded more and more due to the promise of his reward. If we are faithful, we all can have the same joyful expectation of a reward reserved for us! It should not be surprising that Paul looked to death in such a positive life, after all he was imitating Christ, who looked forward to returning to the Father as well.

If we are to imitate Christ as Paul did, there must be a close identification. To imitate means "to produce a copy of: reproduce." When people see us out in the world today, what do they see? Do they see someone whose life is hidden in Christ? Do they see someone who is no longer living for self? Do they see someone claiming to follow Christ but living as a counterfeit instead of a true copy? The world we live in emphasizes glorifying and even deifying self. It is hard to desire to hide ourselves in Christ and live in this world at the same time. We live in a time which stresses independence and doing things our "own way." If we are to be people who truly imitate Christ, we must be willing to hide our lives within the confines of his.

Once we are able to imitate Christ as we should (not sinless perfection, instead living in a state of following after Jesus), we too can look to the end of our lives as gain. What a blessing that is to not dread the end of this life but instead to look forward to it with joyful expectation. God promises those who are faithful to him have a great reward set aside for them (John 14:1-4). We should strive each day to try to live in such a way as to be able to tell others that if they wish to be imitators of Jesus Christ they can know how by imitating the lives we live!



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It is once again, my task is made interesting due to the questions you asked. The questions deal with offices found within the Bible; prophets and elders. If you have never studied these offices, take time to do so. It will be a rewarding study. Let's do what we can to answer these difficult questions.

1. Is there any reason why a qualified man should not desire the work of an elder? (1st Timothy 3.1-2) Does he sin if he doesn't? (James 4.17)

The office of an elder within a scriptural eldership is the world's greatest duty. There are, at last count, 17 different qualifications for a man to be considered to be an elder. With the exception of the family qualifications, these qualifications OUGHT TO reflect every Christian.

Notice the first of 17 different qualities: 1st Timothy 3.1-2 – “This *is* a true saying, **If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.** A bishop **then** must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach...”

It is a noteworthy point to see that desire must be first. But why? The reason is apparent to anyone who has spent any time around the group of men known as the Eldership. Long hours, difficult situations, lack luster Christians, and the purity of the flock are just a few reason why this job is so very difficult and at the same time, so very important. A man could be qualified in all points except _____, and he would not be ready or qualified to lead the flock of God.

Now, does he sin (if he does not want the job)? On the technical side of the words, if he does not desire the office, then he does not meet the qualifications and therefore, he does not meet the requirements of God. Put yourself in this situation. You are standing before the greatest court ever- God's courtroom. You are looking at Him face to face. God open His mouth and asks you why you did not accept the office of an Elder, even though you were qualified in all ways. You muster up all the courage

you have, and triumphantly state, “ I did not want to do it.” That will not pass the test. Do you think Jesus wanted to die? Do you think God wanted to send His Son to die? Is God my master? If He is, then you and I cannot tell the master what the slave will or will not do in service to him.

It is my opinion, based on study, that a man who is completely qualified will desire the office. Any other man is not qualified and cannot be an Elder. **PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, if you are fortunate enough to have a good, faithful Eldership where you worship, you should pray for them, encourage them and thank them for their good leadership.**

2. Aside from false prophets, were all of the preachers mentioned in the Bible inspired? If so, how are we (the church today) like the New Testament (in the Bible) in this regard?

The Bible is an interesting Book. It is an accurate account of the world and her history. It is not a complete history. The accounts we have a 100% true, but we do not have every minute of history from Adam until now.

Under the Old Law, not every preacher mentioned was inspired of God. We read about the Jewish priesthood and find certain facts. Some of those facts are as follows: 1. The priests are responsible for the spiritual correctness of the nation of Israel. 2. The priests were responsible to keep and maintain copies of the Old Testament books / writings. 3. Not every inspired preacher / prophet was noted within the Holy Scriptures. (for more information , read: Leviticus, Ezekiel, Amos)

We read about leaders of the Nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Remember that “the things written afore time were written for our learning...” (Romans 15.4) However, not all leaders of the Nation of Israel were inspired of God. Men like Mordecai and Barak.

But what about those in the New Testament, notice Acts 8.26-39. I often have read this section of Scriptures, only to focus in today on the fact that the Holy Spirit led Phillip to the Eunuch. We do not ever read that Phillip was inspired as he taught. If he was or not notice this verse: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and **preached unto him Jesus.**”(Acts 8.35) It was not a great deal of time before this Nobleman knew he needed to be baptized. But how? It was due to the

preaching of Jesus.

In 1st Corinthians 12-14, Paul deals with the idea of spiritual gifts. These gifts were given by God to the church during the first century until the perfect was completed, the Bible. Notice the following : “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**. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. **But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity. (1st Corinthians 13:8-13) Why would God give these gifts and then remove them? These would keep us faithful unto Him, right? Not necessarily. Being exposed to these gifts did not saved Demus.

This question seems to ask if we are not as complete as those in the first century. That is simply not the case. How many of our 1st century brethren would give all they possessed on this earth to have a copy of the Bible with all 66 books in it? That is the PERFECT. The PART was those spiritual gifts.

How are we like that church we read of in the New Testament? Identical, if we are followers of the divine pattern. While we do not have those miracles, we do have the saving grace of God given to all men who will be faithful and follow Him. Understand this fact: I would love to see a miracle, but I'd rather be saved by God's plan of salvation.

I hope this study was a profitable for you as it was for me. The questions I have received are outstanding. It shows me you are studying and digging deeply into the Holy Word of God. Keep up the good work. May God bless you in your study.

As you study keep an open mind, an open heart and an open Bible—“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” 1st Thessalonians 5:21

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Camp.**

THE BEST PART

The best part of anything having to do with the Bible and the divine God in Heaven is the fact that He has provided a way by which a man can be saved from his sins. Paul wrote that every single person, attempting to justify himself by way of his own means, has fallen short of the mark and has therefore been guilty of trespasses (Romans 3:23). But, thanks be to God, He has not left us alone in order to find our salvation! He has sent Himself, in Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for the forgiveness of all man's sins (John 3:16). BUT, we have to access that salvation which is freely available. How does someone do that?

Hear - Romans 10:17

Believe - John 8:24

Repent - Acts 2:38

Confess - Romans 10:9-10

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16

If you have not done these things, or have never even heard such things, please contact us at the PFP. We would love to help you in your spiritual life so that you can be accepted by the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9).



Satan has perfected his craft. In the Garden of Eden, Eve was convinced that eating the fruit was the righteous choice and God was unjust for commanding otherwise (Gen. 3:1-6). Satan has continued that same trick unto this day—making evil sound good, and good sound evil. The most heinous area this is seen today is “tolerance.” No word ever sounded so innocent while being used so despicably. At its root, tolerance is a noble concept, and a characteristic the Christian should emulate; however, it has taken on a different meaning in modern society.

Many schools around the country have taken a stand against bullying—a problem that has existed since the beginning of time. What parent wants their child to be bullied? What parent would oppose a school assembly addressing this issue? What parent would suspect that such a program would directly attack the practice of Christianity? Bullying is as foreign to Christianity as anything else. To love others as you love yourself is a keystone to Christianity (Gal. 5:14). Jesus’ example is the pinnacle of love, and He is to be credited with the origination of “The Golden Rule”—“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mat. 7:12). One would think Jesus’ words would be utilized in combating this issue, but it is often used as an excuse for denouncing the Lord and His teachings.

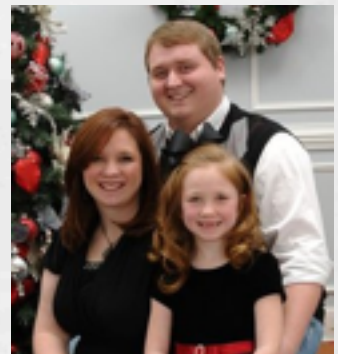
Our society has come to define tolerance as never telling anyone that they are wrong. Speaking out against sin is considered “hate speech” by modern society. It is considered hateful and bigoted to warn those participating in the sin of homosexuality of the error of their ways (Rom. 1:26-28). Society deems it as wrong to lovingly exhort fornicators to seek the path of righteousness (1 Cor. 6:9-10). In man’s eyes, there is nothing more evil than

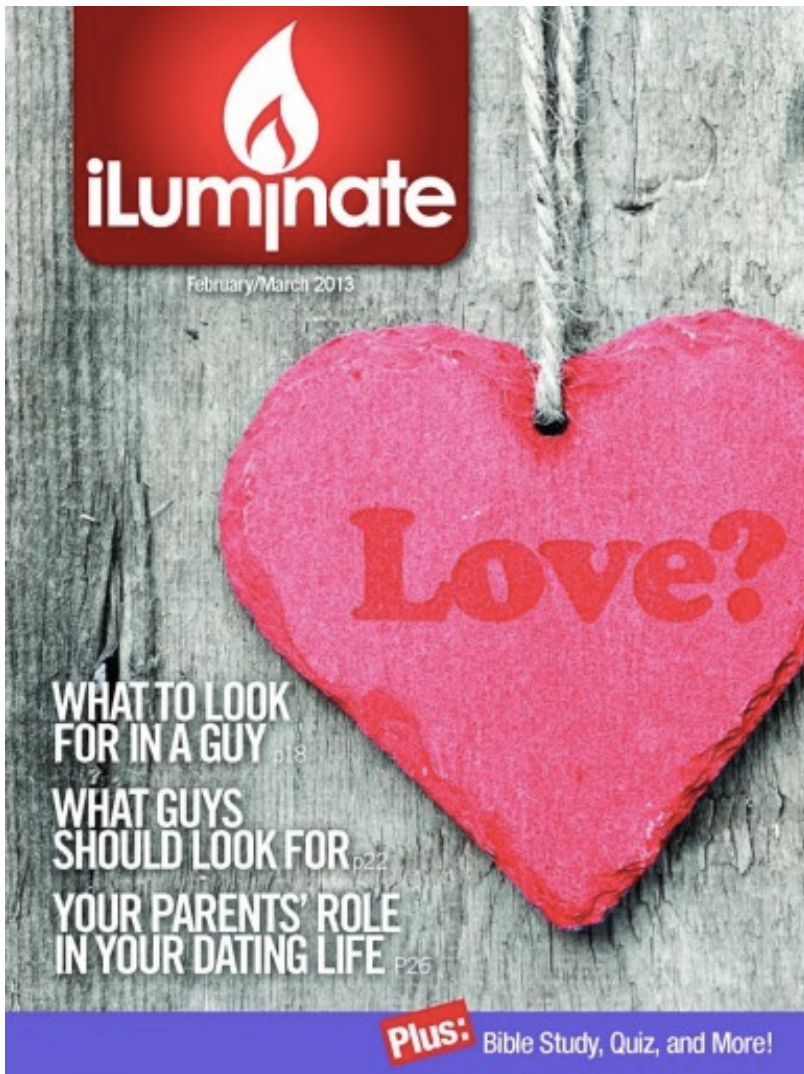
holding someone else to a higher standard—God’s standard.

In light of the facts, the Christian might find himself asking these questions: “How tolerant should I be?” or “How intolerant should I be?” The Bible has an answer. “For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). Jesus is our example in all avenues of life—tolerance included. He was tolerant enough to not prejudice based upon nationality, occupation, or past sins, but He was intolerant enough to plainly and lovingly define the difference between sinfulness and righteousness. It was Jesus who dined with publicans and harlots when others would not (Luke 5:29-32), but it was also Jesus who addressed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders (Mat. 23). It was Jesus who taught the Gospel to a Samaritan woman (John 4), but in doing so He did not overlook her sin; He lovingly addressed and corrected it.

Jesus’ example leads us to practice tolerance in so much that we are kind unto all men—showing them Christian love by our thoughts and actions. His example also leads us to practice intolerance in that we are never afraid or unwilling to confront sin. Loving and caring for our fellow human beings is not manifested in ignoring or celebrating their sins, but in leading them to overcome them. Love involves desiring the greatest good for others, and there is not greater good than Heaven. If we love others, then we must do what we can to get them through the pearly gates of paradise.

Josh Clevenger is the preacher for the Hwy 30 Church of Christ in Guyton, GA but will be relocating to the Rockmart Church of Christ in Rockmart, GA in the coming months.





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SAY WHAT?

with Tony Clay

There would be some among us, those that we would call brethren who would deny that the Bible has anything to say about Jesus and His church as far as predictive prophecy is concerned. Several of our “brotherhood” schools released a one volume commentary entitled *The Transforming Word*, and in the preface of this book they make a declaration that is 100% total blasphemy. They would say that there is no predictive prophecy in the Old Testament concerning Jesus and His church, that all such conclusions were added and misunderstood by New Testament writers. Think about that for a moment: No predictive prophecy in Old Testament (denying clear passages that teach such) and Misapplication in the New Testament (total dismantling of the Christian faith) How these folks can call themselves Christians, is beyond me; denying the Book that makes one a Christian! The Bible declares without a doubt of Jesus and His church. Predictive prophecies about such things are more prevalent than any other recurring theme. Our text is Genesis 49:9-10, and in this text we are going to be introduced to the second Prophecy of Jesus in the Old Testament.

JESUS THE LION (Rev. 5:5)

First, Jacob describes Judah as being a Lion’s “whelp,” literally a Lion’s cub. This cub is destined for great things, as we will notice shortly, but it is still young. Judah as He is, is not the full embodiment of what his tribe will be someday; So it is because of this that the Lion at this time is young, immature, not ready, incomplete. Perhaps we can be compared to Judah. We have not yet attained to what we shall become. Our humanity limits us and we must grow until we, like Judah approach our destiny, which is Jesus. Judah’s tribe would usher in The Lord, and so our lives ought to usher Him in as well, meaning that our actions, words and lives are growing to welcome Him more into our hearts so that He possesses us like He possesses the throne of David and of Judah.

Judah would grow throughout the ages: Judah would be one of the tribes to take charge in the wilderness; Judah would be the lineage of the Kings; David would occupy the throne; Israel would have her greatest prosperity, both militarily and financially under Solomon. But this section has less to do with the physical side of this and more with the coming of Jesus. With every generation, Judah would be closer to bringing about Jesus. As with every year a Lion is growing until full maturity and adulthood, Judah’s adulthood would be recognized when Jesus came.

After Jesus arrived (the full maturity of the tribe of Judah), He would behave as an old lion. The idea in the original language is like the ferocity of a lioness protecting her young. Jesus will be the protector over His people forever. No one will dare to stir up Jesus or rouse Him up because they won’t be able to stand up to Him.

JESUS THE RULER (Mat. 28:18; John 12:48; Eph 1:22-23)

The Sceptre is the lawgiver. Because we do not have a King like the nation of Israel did, we might not be familiar with the customary sceptre. However simple it’s construction was, it contained more than the precious metals and jewels that made it up. The sceptre represented the Kings authority. The King, when speaking to a crowd would hold up His royal sceptre and would point out at the crowd as he spoke, this signified his power to judge, to legislate and rule. When the king was not speaking and was seated, his sceptre would rest on one of his legs in between his feet standing upwards; this is shown by a representation of a king of Persia who is in such a position in the ruins of Persepolis. Now, the Bible says that the sceptre, the lawgiver will not depart until Shiloh comes (that’s Jesus); What about after? Judah’s reign or right on the throne would not cease when Jesus came, rather His reign would continue forever. At the point when Jesus came, He took His place as the final King over the throne of David, the tribe of Judah. When Jesus took the sceptre and gave us his law, He sealed His place as the ruler of the world, most especially, the ruler of His special people.

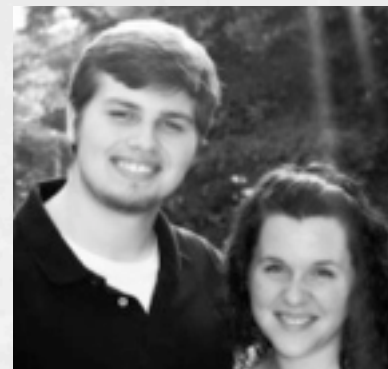
JESUS THE GATHERER (Isa. 2:2-3; John 12:32).

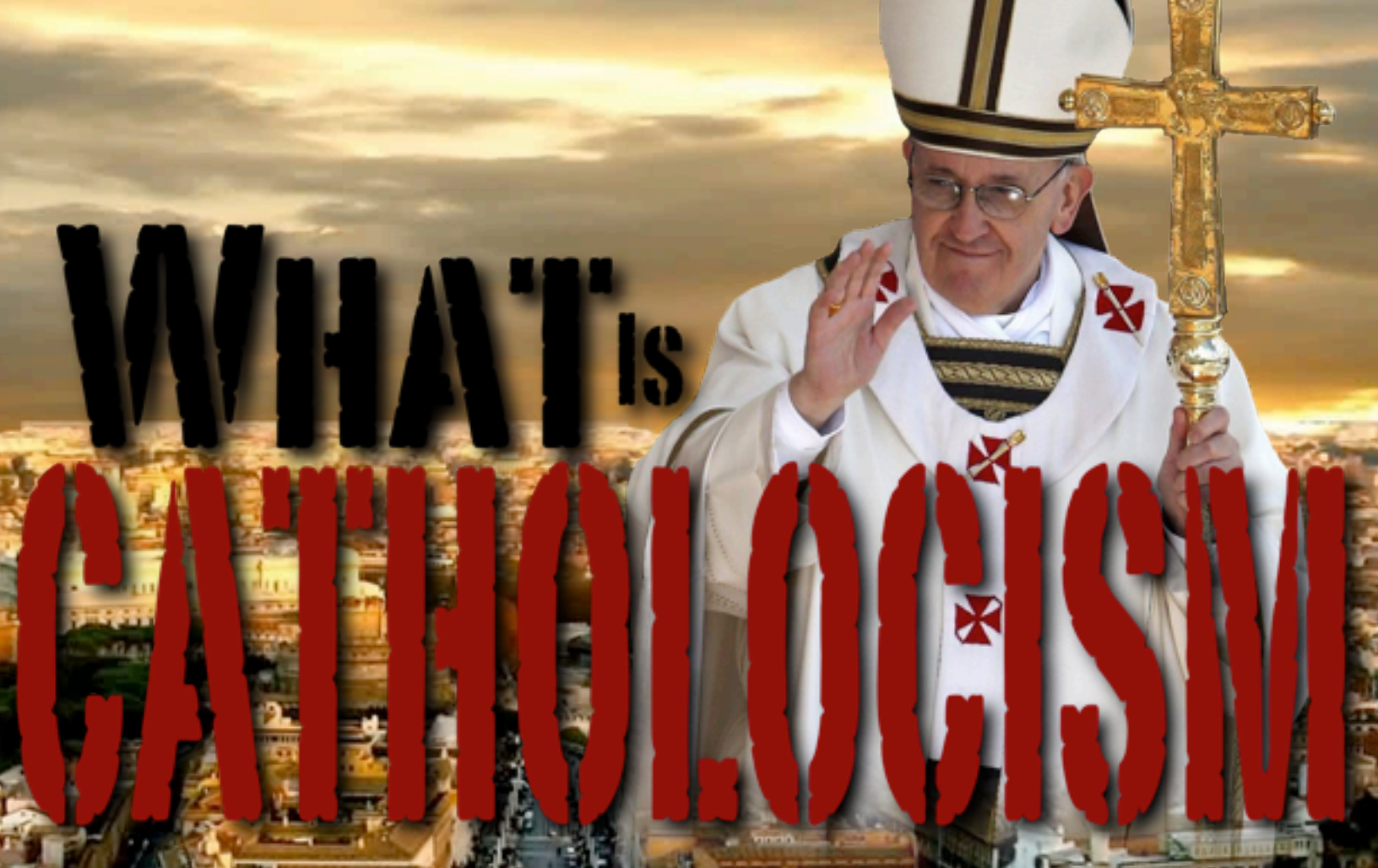
Finally, Jesus is the Gatherer; The Shepherd. What a blessing it is to be a part of Jesus fold, His family. What was only the tribe of Judah, and the nation of Israel is now an all-encompassing Kingdom to which each of us have the blessing of being added upon our obedience. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and He is the one who truly cares for us. Jesus told His disciples how He would gather the world, and what would happen as a result. He said (John 10:32) and after He had been lifted up, He gave every nation, every people the ability to come unto Him (Isa 2:2-3; John 10:2-4, 11-18).

There are fewer passages in Scripture that describe a more intimate picture of Jesus work as Lord. He is the Maturity of the Tribe of Judah, everything that the Tribe was pointing toward since the birth of Judah. He is the One with the glorious authority and power to which we must submit. He is the loving and protective Caretaker who desires for every human being to become a member of His Kingdom.

Now, if Genesis 49:9-10 is not talking about Jesus, could Judah, or any of His descendants live up to what is contained in these short verses. A prophecy is not of its true worth or meaning unless it is fulfilled and the only one that could fulfill such things is Jesus. When someone says that there is no predictive prophecy in the Old Testament, all we have to do is quote Jesus, and tell the world, “It is written.” To God be the glory!

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