

# GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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*CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY*

## PREFERENCE OR TRUTH

### Part 2

By Rayola Kelley

In the last article we considered our status as saints. The way we walk in this world will identify us as sinners or saints. This brings us to the next issue: That of our agendas and priorities. Our agendas and priorities will determine who or what we end up serving in this present age of darkness. Let us be honest, most of us maintain personal agendas that suit our preferences and self-serving priorities.

Jesus made it quite clear that man prefers his own darkness or reality because his deeds are evil (*John 3:19-21*). Such darkness serves as a cloak to cover such deeds. There are different words that are associated with darkness in Scripture. However, such darkness will consume the soul. This darkness entails the influence of sin and death upon the person. Individuals that are walking according to this inner darkness may perceive that such darkness is light, but in reality it is not light at all.

This type of light can be related to our personal understanding that will ultimately determine our reality. Jesus said of such light that if our understanding were nothing but darkness, how great would that darkness prove to be (*Matthew 6:22-23*). It would be great because individuals who are walking according to such inner darkness will perceive all matters of life from this premise, believing that the light they are walking according to is correct.

This type of personal understanding is made up of fleshly influences that harbor such dark elements as vain imaginations, judgmental opinions, prejudices, and superstition. These elements that constitute personal reality often erect and exalt idolatrous images and concepts of God. Such understanding

has been conditioned by worldly philosophies that oppose the real truths of God. It has often been indoctrinated by man-made religions. As a result, such darkness becomes not only a darkness that invades a person's perception, but serves as the board in his or her eye that is quick to judge others, but fails to see the quality of personal fruits (*Matthew 7:1-4, 16-20*).

This brings us to the basis of this darkness. It is nothing more than delusion. Not only does such darkness blind people to their spiritual condition, but it also blinds them to the path that they are walking. Due to this deceptive state, we find that personal delusion can work from three different angles. We all can be *deceived* by *other sources* that will simply appeal to our preferences; or we can *deceive ourselves* by demanding our own reality; or we will *deceive others* by telling them what they want to hear. We know that deception is part of the fruit of sin (*Hebrews 3:13*). We also know that personal delusion operates from three platforms.

*Intelligence:* Many people are deluded by what they think they know. The Bible warns about the false wisdom of conceit (*Romans 12:16*). However, people who are blinded by their conceits cannot begin to imagine that there is any foolishness or fallacy in their way of thinking. The false delusion of conceits will blind them to the fact that they will often prove to be a fool in their indifferent and unrealistic conclusions.

*Worldview:* Worldview comes down to the philosophies about life we adopt or develop along the way. These philosophies are greatly influenced by the world. Our family, culture, type of education, and religious influences will greatly affect our personal take on life. Our worldview will also affect what we value and pursue, thereby, establishing our personal agendas and influencing our priorities. The Apostle Paul puts this matter in perspective: "*Beware lest any man*

*spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"* (*Colossians 2:8*).

Notice how the philosophies of the world and the traditions of man will spoil a person. "Spoil" in this text means to lead away as in the case of seduction (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, #4812*). The traditions of man are powerless. There is no real spirit or life in them. Rudiments point to the foundation of the world. The world has no truth; therefore, it must seduce people into its fantasies, philosophies and false images. Clearly, as Christians, our philosophies concerning the matters of life must be founded in Christ Jesus.

*Abilities:* People put a lot of credence in their personal abilities or in the abilities of others. However, to lean on the arm of the flesh will bring individuals into a cursed life that can only destroy (*Jeremiah 17:5*). There is no real self-sufficiency of man that can be trusted or relied upon when it comes to facing and solving the challenges of life, whether it be in the arenas of religion, education or government. Yet, how many people, including those purporting to be believers, are putting their trust and confidence in man's "so-called" ability to save them? The Apostle Paul clearly tells us our sufficiency can only be found in God (*2 Corinthians 3:5*). The prophet Zechariah tells us that what is accomplished is not through strength or might, but through the Spirit of God (*Zechariah 4:6*).

This brings us to the main challenge that believers are being constantly confronted with. There is no real place of accountability that people can agree to submit to. The reason there is no real place of accountability is that there is no agreement as to what can be considered a correct standard of truth.

For Christians, we all verbally agree that there is one standard of truth, the Word of God. However, when it comes to a place of real accountability in which all matters concerning God and life are considered, there is a debate as to how to interpret the Word of God. As a result, various non-inspired versions

of the Bible, man-made doctrines, mixtures of religious and New Age philosophies, and ideas and movements that are worldly inspired enter the scene. Needless to say, it all seems so logical and wise, yet there is no real truth. As the saying goes, any truth taken into an extreme is no truth at all. Truth that is compromised, adjusted or twisted becomes a form of deception, for the Spirit and life will be missing, creating a false reality or light. However, in the midst of this insanity the harsh warning of God remains standing in its certainty to bring judgment upon all such nonsense: *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness”* (Romans 1:18). (Emphasis added.)

Romans 10:17 instructs us to approach the Bible to believe that it is the truth of God. However, most people approach the Bible to justify their own personal perception or reality. As a result, they pick and choose what they will believe. Needless to say, such people do not end up with any real continuity in their belief or understanding of God and His ways. They have a conglomeration of philosophies and ideas about God that has no real foundation. Such vague gods are nothing more than a matter of vain imaginations.

I remember dealing with a Jehovah’s Witness who had, in a prideful way, confessed that she used to be a Lutheran, but she could not reconcile that a loving God could send anyone to hell. As a result, she looked elsewhere and found that Jehovah’s Witnesses advocated the type of beliefs that best suited what I consider to be her “fanciful notions” about God.

The reality of God’s truths in His Word is that they do not cease to be because mere, pathetic, delusional man has a problem with them. Clearly, the warnings and truths regarding hell will not go away because this woman is uncomfortable with the idea of it. Sadly, when she passes through the door of physical death, she will have to face the harsh reality of hell. What is even sadder is that she could avoid such judgment if she would simply believe God that He sent His Son into the world so

she could be spared from such a place of separation and torment.

There is another delusional person that many people are blindly following. Her name is Oprah Winfrey. Sadly, Oprah has become a guru to many people, including innocent Christians. Admired for her rags-to-riches story, as well as overcoming the various barriers of race and gender, she serves as a source of hope to many who see nothing but hopelessness in their present situation.

I have occasionally watched Oprah, but often I have been left confused by her mixture. She occasionally purports Christian principles, yet she never really exalts the name and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Granted, she mentions God, but so does every other belief system. In a discussion concerning the latest book Oprah has been promoting, “A New Earth”, she was asked how she could reconcile these spiritual teachings (of the book) with her Christian beliefs.

Oprah admitted her Christian background was that of a Baptist. However, in one incident at church, the pastor brought out the point that God was a jealous God. Up to this point of the sermon she confessed that she had been caught up with the vastness and greatness of God, but that particular statement did not sit well with her concept about God being a God of love. Since she could not reconcile it according to her perception, she discarded her foundation, and let God out of the “box”.

Obviously, since there were no real boundaries to guide Oprah’s conclusions or understanding about God, she basically created her own concept of God. Today, Oprah believes that Jesus is not the only way to salvation; rather He came to show us a Christ consciousness. In other words, Oprah has bought into the New Age god, and has come totally under the antichrist spirit that is operating in this world (1 John 4:1-3). One of her inspirations is the New Age Bible called the “*The Course In Miracles*” which she is promoting through her radio program.

Imagine, Oprah was tripped up by one simple fact, yet how many others are being tripped up by some aspect of God that they do not understand, or refuse to, because it does not sit well with the preferred reality they have

adopted about Him? Oprah had a problem with the fact that our holy God, who deserves our complete devotion, service and worship will not jealously share preeminence in our lives with any other god or idol. I am sure if you asked Oprah if she would want to share the affections of her male companion with another woman, she would adamantly say “no”. Yet, according to Oprah for the sake of love, God is supposed to accept any unfaithfulness on our part just to make sure we do not become offended with His holy character. Sadly, many people are following Oprah into her delusion. On judgment day, these individuals may stand up and point an accusing finger at her, but it will be too late for them (Hebrews 9:27).

What happened to Oprah? It is clear that she had never been properly disciplined. As a result, she bought the wrong gospel. The gospel Oprah advocates is very popular. It is the gospel of worldly love. In other words, the world’s concept of love is translated as being God’s form of love. Since God’s love is perceived from a worldly basis, there is no way He would reject anyone. However, God’s love is not like the world’s love. Granted He loves us, but it is because of His love that He provided the means in which we could be saved. Out of His sacrificial and committed love He sent His Son to take our place on the cross of judgment. It is Jesus that saves us, not the concept of God’s love. In other words, you can try to hide behind God’s love all you want, but it will not save you. Clearly, not only is God’s love misrepresented, but it also has had a wrong emphasis placed on it, causing people to miss the real message of the Gospel. It is only by receiving the true message of the Gospel concerning Jesus’ redemption that one can be saved from judgment through God’s love.

Another mistake Oprah made is that she tested a truth according to how it made her feel, not according to the Word of God. Truth will not always set right with our perception. It will not cater to our fickle feelings. It will not adjust to our fleshly inspired agendas and priorities. It will not agree with our carnally inspired conclusions. And, the godly love that stands behind God’s truth will never rejoice in any type of

## ROAD CONSTRUCTION By Jeannette Haley

Besides daffodils and crocuses, the one thing a person can always be assured of, as winter melts into spring, is road construction. It doesn't matter which town you live in, or which road you travel on, sooner or later your eye will catch the unmistakable bright orange associated with road crews. You will probably make a mental note to take an alternate route next time.

Concerning roads, Jesus talked about two of them. Every person on earth is traveling on either one or the other. Here's how He described each road: *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"* Matthew 7:13, 14.

Road construction can also take place in a spiritual sense. Take, for example, Joseph (Joe) who works for the Straightway Road Construction Company, and JD who works for the Broadway Road Company. One bright afternoon JD stopped to pay a visit to Joe.

"Hey, Buddy," JD grinned broadly. "How's construction going?"

Joe, who was busy with a survey crew, glanced over at his visitor. "Hi, JD. What can I do for you?"

"Oh, nuthin,'" JD said. He squinted at Joe from under his hard hat. "It looks to me like your survey boys are making the road too narrow. You should come and see my road construction crew. We started out with the same narrow road, but little by little we've broadened it quite a bit. That way it can accommodate more people, and we've even built little detours along the way where folks can swing off the highway and enjoy different experiences."

Joe's gray eyes grew somber. "Is that so," he said in a hushed voice.

JD's lips curled into a half grin. "Yeah, it's quite the road. You'd do better if you'd construct a broader highway that people could enjoy. After all, it can be a long, tiring journey to the Great City. Why not let people enjoy the ride?" He threw back his head

and roared with laughter.

Joe frowned. He didn't like the direction this conversation was going. "Sorry, JD, but I can't stand around talking. I have work to do." He turned to go, but felt a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"Aw, come on, Joe!" JD bellowed. "Don't be such a pin head."

Joe's jaw tightened and he felt his face grow hot. But, he resisted the urge to punch JD in the mouth. He took a deep breath instead, and calmly said, "Look JD, I have my orders, and I'm following them. The Boss's son is in charge of this road, and I plan to see to it that his orders are carried out fully. If he says this road is to be straight and narrow, then that's the way it's going to be."

JD took a step backward, his dark eyes flashing angrily. "Well, if that's the way you want it. But, I'm telling you right now and I know this from experience, that most of your crew is going to give up and come work for me before that road reaches completion!" With that he spun around and clumped back to his pickup.

Joe watched as JD slammed his truck into gear and roared off in a cloud of dust. "I hope you never come back," he whispered under his breath, but deep inside he knew that that wasn't the last he would see of JD.

Several months passed. Sometimes Joe grew weary with the task before him. Constructing such a straight and narrow road was painstaking. Great attention had to be paid to every detail to ensure that it was laid out exactly as the Boss's son had instructed.

One windy afternoon, as Joe labored to remove an enormous boulder from the center of the road, he spotted JD's pickup roaring toward him. Wiping his forehead with the back of his sleeve, he groaned, "Oh no! Not today! Lord have mercy!"

Sitting behind the wheel of his dirty truck, JD blasted his horn, and motioned for Joe. "Oh, God! Why today, of all days does he have to show up?" Joe muttered through gritted teeth. "You know how weary I am and how weak I feel. You are going to have to carry me through this. If I ignore him, he's just going to sit there and blast his horn all day." He tossed aside his pickax and made his way through the blowing sand and dirt to JD's truck.

"Hey, Buddy, hop in. It looks like you can use a break."

Just then a huge gust of wind slammed Joe against the door of the pickup. Sand and dirt stung his eyes. Groping for the handle, he hurriedly opened the truck and slid on to the worn seat. Trying to catch his breath, he sat silently, his eyes closed.

"Here," JD said as he pressed a dampened towel into Joe's limp hands.

"Thanks," Joe muttered weakly. With trembling hands he carefully wiped his eyes and face. For a fraction of a second the urge to give up and give in gripped his heart, but instead a silent prayer rose from deep within his heart: *"Not my will, but thine be done."* He cleared his throat, and sat up straighter. He turned to look at JD.

"Hey, little Buddy," JD said in a strange voice. "You are really taking a beating out there on that straight, narrow road of yours." His eyes glinted strangely.

Joe squirmed uncomfortably. He reached for the truck handle, but withdrew his hand when the howling wind slammed a river of dirt against the vehicle, rocking it violently. Suddenly Joe felt like a worm about to be devoured by a ravenous bird.

A wicked smile played on JD's lips, but his voice was soft. Sweet, even. Joe looked at him curiously. "I brought something for you to see." He reached under the seat and pulled out a large binder. Joe could see that, among other things, it contained photographs and maps. "I thought you'd like to see how far we've come on the broad highway. It's absolutely wonderful! People are already traveling on it, even though we're not quite finished, and they love it. They are so excited that they are spreading the news to others. In fact, there are *millions* traveling the Broadway highway." JD chuckled, and laid the open notebook in Joe's lap.

Everything inside of Joe wanted to toss the notebook out the window, but the storm had turned even uglier. It was as if the whole world had been plunged into a thick, black pit of thunder and lightning. Hail pounded the truck in a deafening assault. Joe fought in vain against the urge to look at the notebook, but his eyes, as if

they had a mind of their own, fixed on the glowing images. It was the most beautiful highway Joe had ever seen. Everything that could please the eyes and the senses reflected along the broad highway as far as one could see in a dazzling array of sensuousness. There was nothing missing of all the riches and pleasures that the world had to offer. It was overwhelming, breathtaking, and strangely compelling. Somewhere in the back of Joe's mind he faintly heard the words, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

Dazed, Joe's eyes fell on the picture closest to him. His finger traced the outline of the most magnificent church building imaginable. Never had he seen such elegance in a church structure. It was built near the entrance to the broad way. He leaned closer to gain a better view of it, but quickly drew back in horror, for the materials that made up its structure were an abomination to God. From a distance, it looked more beautiful than anything the world had ever seen, but a closer examination revealed the elements of man's religious traditions, idolatry, immorality, greed, covetousness, pride, wrath, lust and all things contrary to the way, the truth and the life. It promised life, but delivered death. Jesus was not there.

Joe began to tremble. In spite of the raging storm outside, somehow, he must escape from this terrible nightmare. "Hey, Buddy! What's the matter?" JD's voice startled Joe back to the present. "Here, look at this page." JD hastily turned the page. Joe gasped. He could plainly see that the road had been broadened to accommodate a large wedding party. There were thousands, maybe millions, of people there. They all seemed so happy. Again, Joe leaned closer to the picture to study all the details. Surely this broad highway was full of amazing and wonderful things. It all seemed so good, so right. But wait! Who was marrying whom?

Tears pooled in Joe's eyes as he discerned that this boisterous marriage was all about the marriage of the church to the world. Then the images, that had been cleverly disguised as things to be desired, of things beautiful, came into sharp focus—images of adultery, perversion,

and ungodliness. Everything was politically correct, immoral, idolatrous and perverted. Nothing was sacred or holy; absolutely nothing—not the music, not the worship, not the preaching. The Bibles being used were perverted. There were no hymnals. There was no preaching against sin. There was no repentance. Jesus was not there.

"I am leaving!" Joe announced as he fumbled for the door handle. "I have work to do!" Thick darkness pressed against the pickup, threatening to squeeze it and its occupants into a heap of twisted metal. Joe struggled to breathe in the suffocating air. "I..I.." he choked, "I'm leaving..."

"Why?" JD roared. "You are an idiot, Joe! Why do you cling to that stupid, straight, narrow, hard road when you could join us on the broad way and enjoy yourself? What good is it going to do for you to continue on that narrow, straight road? Look what you're missing! You could have it all. You are a fool to give it all up for that demanding Boss of yours and his son!"

Joe closed his eyes and sat in reflective silence for several moments. Then he slowly reached inside his jacket pocket and carefully removed a picture. "Here's why," Joe said in a husky voice as he handed the picture-plan to JD.

JD smirked as he took the picture, but his countenance quickly took on a new expression. Joe studied the kaleidoscope of emotions playing on JD's features as he stared transfixed at the small picture. After long moments he growled in a low voice, "You better get out of here!" He tossed the picture at Joe.

Snatching up the precious picture, Joe hurled himself out of the dusty vehicle. Much to his surprise the storm was hastening a quick retreat, pursued by the sun's golden rays. He heard the roar of JD's ("Just like Demas," 2 Timothy 4:10) truck in the distance. Smiling to himself, Joe walked briskly back to the narrow road, and dropped to his knees. "Lord," he cried, "thank You. Thank You for this . . ." He held the picture of the plan up be-

fore his face. "I can see this straight and narrow road, and running parallel to it the broad way." He lowered the picture. Tears filled his eyes as he ran his finger along the narrow road, tracing it to its final, triumphant destination. "The Door," Joe whispered reverently. He looked hard at the picture. He could see the narrow Gate and the shape of a cross. Somehow, he could also see the risen Son of God overshadowing the gate, with the nail prints in his hands. Jesus was there.

Joe then somberly traced the path of the broad way to its finish. There was no welcoming gate at the end of this road, but rather a great chasm into which all who traveled upon it descended. Beyond the chasm was a massive stone wall fixed that surrounded the Great City. None of those souls who traveled the broad way could enter therein, but were swallowed up within the great gulf.

"Truly, Lord," Joe said as he resumed his journey upon the narrow road, "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?"

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My friend, there are only two roads—the narrow road, and the broad road. Which one are you on today?

## WRONG ROADS

"The only way to be saved from the lure of the wrong roads is by doing what our Master [the Lord Jesus Christ] tells us, that is, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." If we do not watch and pray we shall be led into temptation before we know where we are.

"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" said Jesus (Luke 18:8). He will find faith in individual men and women, but the general organized form of the Christian church has slipped almost wholesale onto wrong roads to the Kingdom."

--Oswald Chambers



iniquity no matter what form it may come in (1 Corinthians 13:6). It will always expose the selfishness of our agendas and the self-serving ways of our priorities that are often covered up by the different false cloaks of personal charity and religion.

The final mistake Oprah made is that she made the matters of God about herself, rather than acknowledge that God's ways and thoughts are higher than hers (Isaiah 55:8-9). She brought God down to her level of understanding, while deluding herself that she had let Him out of some religious "box" to truly discover Him. In the end, she opened up a door in which any type of conceivable presentation or lie about God could take root. Since Oprah preferred her own reality about God, she went into the darkness of delusion and unbelief, while giving way to the seducing, false light of the doctrines of devils (2 Corinthians 11:2-4, 12-15; 1 Timothy 4:1-2).

When we consider the light as being our personal understanding, which is often nothing more than our preferred reality, we begin to realize why the Bible instructs us to walk by faith and not by sight. In other words, we must not walk according to our own understanding, but according to the truth firmly established in the Word of God. Jesus stated that He is the essence of all truth. If we do not Scripturally get Jesus right as our foundation to what is real, as well as line up to Him as our cornerstone in relationship to what is right, He will become a stumbling stone of judgment to us as we come under the strong influence of a different reality (John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 2 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 2:6-8). This is why we must be careful about who we choose to follow in our spiritual journey. The Apostle Paul put forth the real test to following anyone when it comes to the matters of our spiritual welfare: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Obviously, if Oprah is not leading anyone to the real Christ, then she falls in the category of being a blind leader that is leading those who are also blinded to the true Gospel. Both will fall into the

ditch of judgment (Matthew 15:14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

The harsh reality is that in our fleshly state, we will never prefer God's truth to our self-serving reality. This is why we are instructed to love the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). It is only by truly loving the Jesus of the Bible and His Word, that we will cause our personal preferences, thoughts, feelings, and conclusions to give way to what is right, pure and acceptable to God.

How about you? What are you presently giving way to? Is it your personal preferred reality about God or the unchanging truths of God?

### RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

**Q:** *I am confused about the concept of the Godhead. I have been told that the term "Trinity" is a "Catholic" term, and since it is from such an erroneous source, it simply disproves the concept that God is triune. Since the concept of God appears to be a joke, then how can Jesus be both God and man? And, if Jesus is truly both God and man, how can I obey the Scriptures that tell me I have to be like Jesus? After all, if He is God, how could I ever become divine? I just don't understand! Could you somehow bring some understanding to my confusion?*

**A:** You are not the first person who is struggling with this issue, nor will you be the last. Let us start out by dealing with the term, "Trinity." According to David W. Bercot in his introduction to the writings of Tertullian in the book, "A Glimpse At Early Christian Church Life", this Church leader was the first to coin the term "Trinity" in relationship to describing the Godhead. Apparently Tertullian was the one who developed Latin terminology to express the truths that had been presented primarily in Greek. Tertullian, who was very fluent in both Greek and Latin, was trying to reach the numbers of western Christians who only knew Latin at that time.

As to the timeline, Tertullian was born in A.D. 150. According to E. H. Broadbent in his book, "The Pilgrim Church," what was considered to be the Old Catholic Church came into being in the third century under the leadership of Cyprian (200-258). What we

know as the Roman Catholic Church was established in the fourth century. In fact, the first council that was convened under the auspice of Constantine (the first Roman Catholic Pope), in regard to the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church as to its dogma and practices, which was a mixture of Christian truth and paganism, was A. D. 325. Since Latin was the main language at that time, the Catholic Church simply adopted the Latin terms that had already been established by early church leaders such as Tertullian in regard to Christian truths. As you can see, the term "Trinity" is Latin in origin, but the Catholic Church did not inspire it, it simply adopted it as part of its own personal dogma.

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is both God and man. Theologians call this the "hypostatic union." However, when the Bible instructs us to be like Jesus it is not in relationship to His deity, but His humanity. The Word of God tells us that Jesus was the second (or last) Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). In other words, the first Adam rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden and failed to maintain his state of innocence as a means to reflect the glory of God. As a result of this great fall, all men continue to sin and fall short of reflecting the glory of their Lord in this world (Romans 3:23). The second Adam, Jesus, maintained His sinless state, bringing back into the world the reflection of God (John 14:7-11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21-25). We also know that Jesus had to maintain this sinless state so that He could be offered up on the altar of the cross as God's Passover Lamb on our behalf.

Sin clearly marred the reflection that was to be cast by man in the midst of creation. As man, Jesus represented the real purpose of man in this world. He brought the unhindered reflection of God back into it. Since man had also lost his way because of sin, Jesus became the way for man to rediscover his original state, calling and purpose in this world through His life, example and death. In a sense, Jesus became the visible, living example of the type of godly person we can all become if we simply follow His footsteps as man. Let us consider the example Jesus left us as man.

*His disposition:* Jesus gave up His glory or capacity as God to take on the

form of a servant in order to be fashioned as a man. We are all servants of sin, but Jesus' example as a servant shows us we must give up our vainglory in order to take on the humble disposition of a servant of God to be conformed to Jesus' very image (*Romans 8:29; Philippians 2:1-4, 6-8; Hebrews 2:7*).

*His attitude:* We are told to have the mind or attitude of Jesus in matters. Jesus instructed us to learn of Him, for in His humanity He was lowly (humble) in disposition and meek in attitude. Due to His disposition and attitude, He was submissive to the plan of redemption and came into subjection to the Father's will to carry it out. Therefore, we must have the mind of Christ to come into submission to that which is greater in the scheme of eternity, and into subjection to the perfect will of God according to His work on earth (*Matthew 11:28-29; Philippians 2:5*). It is important to point out that attitudes reflect our disposition. By studying *Philippians 4:8* we can gain an insight into the mind of Christ. Clearly, it comes down to what we think upon. This is why *Proverbs 23:7a* states: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."

*Empowered:* When Jesus gave up His capacity as God, He gave up His authority and power as God. As our example, Jesus in His humanity shows us that we cannot walk out the Christian life unless we have been empowered from above. In His humanity, He was anointed by the Spirit, as well as led by Him in order to fulfill His mission as the Lamb of God (*Matthew 3:16; 28:18; Luke 4:1, 18-19; Romans 8:13-14; 1 John 2:27*).

*Perfection:* *Hebrews 5:8-9* tells us that Jesus was brought to perfection in His humanity by learning obedience through suffering. As Christians we can only come to maturity or perfection through obedience to God and His Word. However, we cannot truly obey our Lord, until we first deny ourselves so that we can truly love and serve Him. We must then pick up our cross as we become crucified to the demands of the flesh and the world. Each step represents personal loss and suffering. But, through such a process we learn to follow Jesus into spiritual maturity or perfection.

*Identification:* Jesus became

identified with us as man in order to address our sin. As a result, we must become identified with Him to ensure that we put on His life. Since Jesus is the essence of our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, we will learn how to walk according to His wisdom, live in light of His righteousness, allow ourselves to be set apart unto God through His sanctification, and be established in His complete work of redemption (*Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 1:30*). The Apostle Paul summarized the importance of this identification on both the part of Jesus and on our part as believers in *2 Corinthians 5:21*: "For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

*Life and Resurrection:* Now that we have talked about how Jesus serves as our example in His humanity, we must consider in what way His deity affects us. The Apostle Peter tells us that according to Jesus' divine power, we have been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who is calling us to glory. We are to partake of His divine nature. To partake of something reminds us that Jesus is the Bread of life who came down from heaven. As our Bread, we must believe who He is (deity and man), as well as assimilate His eternal life, righteous ways, and godly teachings into our life (*John 6:35, 51-58; 2 Peter 1:3-4*). Ultimately, we will become like Him in His humanity. The Bible also tells us that when we receive Jesus, we receive the gift of eternal life. Eternal means there is no beginning or end to it. It always has been and always will be. Jesus is the essence and author of this life. If He was not deity, He could not be the source or author of eternal life (*John 11:25-26; 14:6; Hebrews 5:8-9*).

Resurrection points to the very power of God. Scripture tells us that it was God's power that raised Christ from the grave (*Romans 10:9*). Jesus said that the only sign that would be given to the unbelieving religious leaders was that of Jonah. In essence, Jesus was saying that in His death, burial and resurrection all claims regarding His identity and work of redemption would be verified. Clearly, Scripture identifies God as

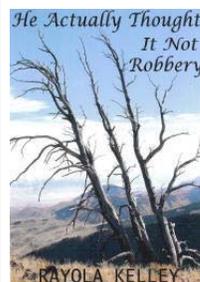
being the One who raised Christ from the dead. As you study Scripture, it verifies that all three persons of the Godhead were involved in the resurrection of Jesus. *Galatians 1:1* stated that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. *Romans 8:11* tells us that it was the Spirit in Christ that raised Him from the dead. Then you have Jesus' words in *John 2:19-21*: "Jesus answered, and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years what this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body."

Jesus was also part of His own resurrection. In fact, He is the resurrection power that will raise every believer up in that last day (*John 5:25-29; 11:25-26*). Obviously, when we believe by simple child-like faith the work Jesus did in His humanity on the cross on our behalf, we will then experience the essence of His deity through receiving His eternal life and resurrection power.

As you can see, this is quite a subject. You can approach it from various angles. However, I suggest you simply approach the Bible to believe it by faith, and the Holy Spirit will bring spirit and life to it through revelation as to Jesus' true identity. Meanwhile, I hope this has answered some of your questions.

## He Actually Thought It Not Robbery

by Rayola Kelley



This unique and powerful book is considered a love letter to her precious Lord. She strives to share the revelation she received in her studies of Jesus Christ as found in *Philippians 2:5-11*. Rayola unveils Christ in greater ways as she takes the reader line by line. Her prayer is that the reader will never look at Jesus the same way again. This is a great book for every true seeker. <http://www.gentleshepherd.com/ebooks/christianebooks/gsmbooks.htm>