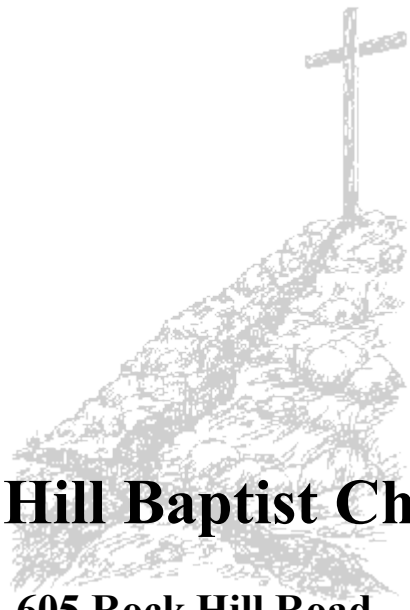


Why The Lamb?

Acts 8:32-33



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(Isaiah 53:7-11 KJV) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. {8} He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. {9} And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. {10} Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. {11} He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Acts 8:32-33 (KJV) "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: {33} In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."

Introduction

If you want to be great in this world or in the next, you will *never* be great until you recognize yourself as hopelessly reliant on God. Philip was one of those men in the Scripture who was totally reliant on God. Though he had only been chosen to serve as a *deacon in the early Church*, (Acts 6:5) Philip paid attention to what God told him to do. God had told the Apostles to go to

Samaria and preach the Gospel (**Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8**), but only the deacon Philip was obedient to the leading of Yeshua¹. The Apostles did not bother going to Samaria until Philip went - and once they saw the success of the ministry, they were quick to send representatives of the Apostles into that area (**Acts 8:14**). They did as many of us do - when they find themselves behind or lagging in something that should have been done, they quickly sent a delegation in that direction. But we need not quickly try to make right that which we have not done, but we need only trust and obey.

Now that things were happening in Samaria, lives were being saved by faith in Christ, you'd expect God to let Philip stay where he was. That's not how God operates. Here Philip is in the middle of a successful ministry and God, the Infinite Spirit of Creation, tells him to *head toward Gaza*, a place in the desert. Move from a successful place to a desert place? Most of us would have questioned God, albeit respectfully, but not Philip. God told him to move, so he moved! He left a successful revival meeting that perhaps rivaled anything Billy Graham ever did, and went to the desert.

As he moved into Gaza he saw a lone man sitting in a chariot reading. The man was from Ethiopia, it was evident, not someone from Philip's part of the world. The Spirit of God told Philip "**Go near, and join thyself to this chariot**" (**Acts 8:29**). So Philip goes up to the chariot and asks the Ethiopian, an important man in that kingdom, "**Do you know what you're reading**"? (**Acts**

8:30). The Ethiopian said, "**How can I understand this unless someone explains it to me**"? (**Acts 8:31**).

God sent someone to explain the passage to the Ethiopian, and that someone was Philip. Here's what they read together:

Acts 8:32-33 (KJV) "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: {33} In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."

1a. The Infinite God Assumed Mortality To Pay For Our Salvation

Just as God sent Philip to explain this passage to the Ethiopian Eunuch, He has put this message on my heart to explain to you. In order to explain this text to you I am led to introduce two *Biblical concepts* to you this morning: the *mortality of man* and the *immensity and infinity of God*. We like to think we are in control of things, but such thoughts are foolish and limited - even dangerous. The Bible tells us that mankind - that is you and I - are *not in control*. We read:

(1 Corinthians 1:27-28 KJV) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to

¹ The Jewish name for Jesus, Joshua, Yeshua - our Savior!

confound the things which are mighty; {28} And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

God has chosen the foolish things of the world and has chosen to work through vessels that have little or no strength the accomplish His Almighty task.. He has chosen those who are unable to do the impossible as long as they rely on Him. God is in control, and God in His infinity will be satisfied!

1b. ..."before the world..."

How much is God, *the Infinite Creator*, in control? The Spirit led me to look up these three words, *before the world*, in my Bible. **These three words** are used in several very interesting places. In their *very first use in Scripture* we see that *before the world* emphasizes that Jesus Christ was with God the Father in the *splendor of Heaven* before this world was ever created. Read with me:

John 17:5 (KJV) "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world² was."

Jesus Christ, God the Son, was with God the Father in eternity past prior to the creation of this world. He was

2 pro (preposition) + kosmos = before the world was

with God in infinity for He is God in infinity. I do not have time to teach the Doctrine of the Trinity here, but I state this for the record: Jesus was, is, and will always be. He possessed the *same glory of God* that the Father possessed *before the world was* - and the One Who prayed to the Father *before His crucifixion* - Who is also the **Sheep led to the slaughter** that the Ethiopian Eunuch is reading about. Jesus Christ *laid aside His glory momentarily to come and be that Sheep* for us.

1. Jesus Christ, God the Son, was with God the Father in _____ prior to the creation of this world (**John 17:5**). Though Jesus Christ appeared to be as *finite* as you and I, as mortal as you and I, His mortality was _____.

Though Jesus Christ appeared to be as *finite* as you and I, as mortal as you and I, His mortality was *put on much like a man would put on a coat*. He *took on Himself* humanity so He could be the *sheep led to the slaughter* for us.

Let's look at the next before the world statement Scripture:

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 (KJV) "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery³, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: {8} Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the

3 musterion {pronounced moos-tay'-ree-on}, a *fraternal* or *club* secret, known only to members of the exclusive club. This word in Scripture is used for the salvation we have by faith in Christ Jesus.

Lord of glory."

Going back to the passage Philip is expounding to the Ethiopian Eunuch, why was Jesus Christ, the One Who was with the Father in infinity, led **as a sheep to the slaughter**? This ***before the world*** statement in Scripture emphasizes that there was a *hidden wisdom of God* that existed prior to the creation of this world. That *hidden wisdom*⁴ was God's eternal and infinite plan to *save fallen mankind* by offering up Jesus for our sins. The Bible says that - if the princes of this world had understood this great Plan of Salvation - a Plan put in motion *before this world was ever created* - then they would not have crucified Jesus Christ.

Here is the *Rosetta stone of God*, a miraculous truth that explains so much of our text. This is the *dictionary definition* for that Word which so puzzled the Ethiopian Eunuch, but was so easily explained by Philip. The Eunuch read:

Acts 8:32-33 (KJV) "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: {33} In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."

⁴ apokrupto {pronounced ap-ok-roop'-to}, Perfect Passive Participle, something hidden with the result that it remained hidden until it was revealed.

and was puzzled, for who can know the Mind of God.

But God, from infinity past, determined that Jesus Christ would die for the sins of the world *long before man ever fell in sin in the Garden of Eden.* That *hidden wisdom* of God - the Eternal Plan of Salvation - can only be explained when you do as Philip did:

2. But God, _____, determined that Jesus Christ would die for the sins of the world *long before man ever fell in sin in the Garden of Eden.*
(1 Corinthians 2:7-8)

Acts 8:35 (KJV) "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

It can only be understood when we **preach unto you Jesus**. Salvation is only in Jesus Christ, only by faith in Him - in what He did for you *from eternity past*. Philip told the Eunuch the same thing I'm going to tell you today...

If you're saved, or if you want to be saved, then your salvation was purchased with the spent Blood of Christ. You are redeemed from eternal damnation - not because you're good people, nor because you deserve that redemption - but you are redeemed by the Blood of Christ.

1c. Why a Baby In A Manger?

Why did Jesus Christ come to this earth as a human baby? There was a reason that He came into this world as a baby **wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger (Luke 2:7,12)**. The Holy Spirit told Isaiah that **the Lamb would come** and that this **Lamb would be a Man**, a Person sent from God. Where would you expect to find a Lamb but in a manger? Wouldn't you expect that first people who would come on a newborn Lamb would be lowly shepherds? Jesus came into this world, and His first nursery was the same nursery that any animal would have. And why not: He came to die for our sins! We are told in the Scripture:

Ephesians 1:7 (KJV) "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"

and again,

Colossians 1:14 (KJV) "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"

Both you and I are sinners, as is every person on the face of this earth, imperfect, and condemned by our imperfection in the eyes of the Perfect God Who created all things. This Perfect God, one the ancient Jews called the unpronounceable YHWH, is also perfect in love, for He is love (**1 John 4:8, 16**), and Perfect Love

determined from eternity past to offer salvation to those Whom He loves.

The way of salvation is the Blood of Christ.

The Bible has *never* taught, as modern liberal theology teaches, that Jesus Christ came to be *a good example* for us to follow into Heaven. **If Christ had come merely as a good example for us to follow, then He could have come as a full grown man.** Listen Beloved: You can mimic every action Jesus ever did and yet remain lost. **It was not the *example that Jesus set* that redeems the lost, but it is His death *as the Lamb of God*.** Jesus Christ rose

3. It was not the _____ *that Jesus set, nor following His example* that redeems the lost, but it is His _____ *as the Lamb of God.* (**Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14**)

from the grave to offer proof positive that belief in Him offers eternal life - but His resurrection did not pay our way into a relationship with God.

He looked like a Baby in a manger, a Baby out of place, but He was never more in His element than when He lay in that feed trough on the night of His birth. Where else would you expect to find a Sacrificial Lamb but in a manger?

He came for one reason, and one reason only: to suffer and die so we who believe will not have to suffer after

death in eternal flame. He shed His Blood for you and me, so God could claim us into His eternal family in the Heavens.

4. He looked like a Baby in a manger, a Baby out of place, but He was never more _____ than when He lay in that feed trough on the night of His birth. (**Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 John 8:8, 16**)

Jesus was **led as a Lamb to the slaughter** because His Blood had to be poured out for us. We are *justified* or declared *innocent* before God not because we are innocent, but because He took your place and mine. The Scripture says:

Romans 5:9 (KJV) "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

To those who do not believe that God will send the unbeliever to eternal punishment, I want you to notice that the Scripture says **we shall be saved from wrath** because of His shed Blood. Because He was the Lamb of God, because He suffered the wrath of God, because His Blood was shed, I shall never see that Lake of Fire, the very Wrath of God poured out on all who reject the Lamb.

What does the Bible say about the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ our Lord? It says that God *was our enemy*, that we

stood in opposition to Him and His ways. The Bible says that this Enemy loved us so much that He decided to shed His own Blood for us. A great gulf of sin and human *allegedly good deeds* stood between us and God. We thought that we could get to God by being good enough, but our every effort was sinfully divisive, our every action took us farther from God.

Ephesians 2:13-16 (NASB) "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. {14} For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, {15} by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, {16} and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity."

The Blood of the Lamb became a river of life, a river with no bottom.

The world hates the Blood, and the worldly hate the thought of it. The unsaved mock the Blood because the shed Blood of the Lamb reminds us that our works, no matter how magnificent, no matter how charitable, still cry out for the Blood to be acceptable before God. The Blood of the Lamb shows every work that we do apart from Christ to be no more than *dead works before God*.

Hebrews 9:14 (KJV) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

2. The Infinite God Assumed Humiliation, Being Punished In Our Place

5. The world hates the _____, and the worldly hate the thought of it. The unsaved mock the _____ because the _____ reminds us that our works, no matter how magnificent, no matter how charitable, still cry out for the Blood to be acceptable before God. (**Romans 5:9; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 9:14**)

Blood had to be shed. The work of the Cross had to be accomplished, or we would never be saved. The Lamb who started His earthly life in a feed trough grew to be a Man. He lived a spotless life on this earth, and His dear sinless Body was punctured and His Blood shed to give us eternal salvation. One old time preacher said it this way:

The *only* thing we contributed to our salvation was the nail scars in His hands and feet, and the tears in His brow where the crown of thorns were so roughly driven ...

The *only* thing we contributed to our salvation was the nail scars in His hands and feet, and the tears in His brow where the crown of thorns were so roughly driven. The Lamb was given neither nursery nor cradle at His entrance into this life, and was wrapped in the same rags at both birth and death. He is the Lamb of God Who, through His Blood, took away the sin of the world - if only you accept what He has done (**John 1:29**).

Let's read our focal text again:

(Acts 8:32-33 KJV) The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: {33} In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

Which brings us to that third *before the world* statement in Scripture, which is:

2 Timothy 1:9 (KJV) "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"

With the Ethiopian Eunuch we again ask the question, *why was Jesus led like a sheep to the slaughter? Why was Jesus humiliated on that old Rugged Cross?* Because our works were insufficient to take us to God's Heaven. We stood outside glory, looking through the windows of Heaven hoping for just a taste of that eternal glory. But how can we, *outside of the infinity and eternity of God*, hope to possess something that was

never in our grasp in the first place? Man is hopelessly sinful, tainted, and very short of the glory of God. If glory was to be bestowed on us, it would have to be bestowed by God - Who alone is the Owner of Glory. Our limitations, our failures, our sins, our humanity had to be laid on God.

Herein is Grace. Not that we *earned nor deserved* salvation, but that God *from eternity past* decided to make us recipients of His Grace. Our salvation is **according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.**

6. Herein is Grace. Not that we *earned nor deserved* salvation, but that God _____ decided to make us recipients of His Grace. Our salvation is **according to his _____, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.** (Acts 8:32-33; 2 Timothy 1:9)

Before Adam ever ate of the forbidden fruit, long before mankind fell into the mire of sin, God determined that He would save us according to **His own purpose and Grace**. The Infinite God determined that He would join with the Finite Mortal and elevate all who believe to Eternal Life through the death of Christ Jesus. It is not because of our works that we are saved, but because of His work - the work of the Infinite Son - that we are redeemed from eternal punishment.

Why would He do such a thing? This brings us to that next *before the world began* statement:

Titus 1:2-3 (KJV) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; {3} But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;"

God made a promise of eternal life to *all who would believe in Him before the world began*. Only God - Who is Love - would do this. He made a promise to bring the mortal into immortality *before anyone was there to make a promise to*. He made a promise, and made it to Himself that He would save all who believed in Jesus Christ - the Lamb of God - Who would die for our sins. And what is the point of all this? We are told in the Scripture:

(1 Corinthians 1:29 KJV) That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Whatever you have or hope to be, you have it of and because of God's Grace. He is the reason, the One to Whom all praise must be given. Following this Biblical truth, we see a certain man named Philip - a deacon turned evangelist - who was pliant to the leading of the Spirit of God. Philip⁵ was the first person to go into Samaria (Acts 8:5-6), and because he was obedient to God to preach Christ in this hated⁶ area he brought a *revival* of salvation among the lost. You see, God uses

⁵ not Philip the Apostle (John 1:44), but Philip the deacon (Acts 6:5), also called *the evangelist* (Acts 21:8-9)

⁶ for the Samaritans were hated among the Jews - they were the mongrel children of mixed blood, born of Jewish intermarriage among the Gentiles

those who are pliant to His Will in mighty ways. Philip was pliant. He believed in Jesus. He didn't just have an intellectual assent to Jesus - didn't just have the *facts of Christianity* in his mind, but truly *believed Jesus*.

Salvation is given to *all who believe in Him*, and this Gift - a free gift, mind you - has been in the mind of God *before the world was ever created*. The promise was made before Adam ever sinned. Though it was not evident until about 2000 years ago, the Cross was a reality *before it ever happened* because of two words: **God promised.**

But here's the third point of our text, dear friends, and that is:

3. Jesus Humbled Himself For You, But You Must Submit To Grace To Be Saved

(Acts 8:33 KJV) In his humiliation⁷ his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

We close our sermon with these three words: **in His humiliation**. Jesus left the splendor of Heaven to lower Himself to die for us. The Infinite became the Lamb of God, and shed His Blood for our salvation.

You may be proud, or even arrogant - but **you cannot be saved until you *repent* of trying to save yourself and *humble yourself* to accept that method of salvation God has provided for you. This is the message of the early Church, and the same message that God sends out today.**

7. You cannot be saved until you _____ of trying to save yourself and _____ to accept that method of salvation God has provided for you. This is the message of the early Church, and the same message that God sends out today. **(Acts 2:38; 3:19-20; 17:30-31; 26:20)**

The Gospel message is not "God has a plan for your life" - though He does have a plan for your life. The Gospel message is not "Jesus came to be a great Example for us to follow" - though Jesus *is* a great Example for us to follow. The Gospel message is this:

Acts 2:38 (KJV) "... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts 3:19-20 (KJV) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; {20} And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:"

Acts 17:30-31 (KJV) "And the times of this

⁷ tapeinosis {pronounced tap-i'-no-sis}, to be made low or vile, humility

ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: {31} Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [Jesus Christ] whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Acts 26:20 (NASB) "but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance."

Repent, that is, turn away from every method of salvation, and turn to the Lamb of God. Do not over analyze what God has said. Believe that His Blood was shed for you, and believe that Jesus Christ, that Lamb of God, shed His Blood for you. **Humble yourselves** to Christ, and bend your knee to the Infinite God Who humbled Himself for you. As the preacher said, "**repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance**". Proud people will never be saved, for proud people never turn from their own means of salvation to the Blood. The Bible says:

Proverbs 6:16-17 (KJV) "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: {17} A proud look ... "

We are fond of saying *God loves the sinner, but hates*

the sin, and it is true that the Bible says:

John 3:16 (KJV) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But that statement, *God loves the sinner, but hates the sin* is not necessarily Biblically correct. The statement is misleading, for the Bible says:

Psalms 5:5 (KJV) "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest⁸ all workers of iniquity."

This is *very clear*, no words are minced. God *hates* or *is an enemy of* those who do evil. The Scripture further amplifies this by saying:

Psalms 11:5-7 (KJV) "The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth⁹. {6} Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. {7} For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright."

Notice that the same Hebrew word for *hate* is used. The

8 sane' {pronounced saw-nay'}, Qal Perfect, hate, is an enemy of

9 sane' {pronounced saw-nay'}, Qal Perfect, hate, is an enemy of

Infinite God *hates* or is *an enemy* of those who do evil, who hurt or do violence. Perhaps now we can see why God the Son from eternity past, long before the creation of the world, agreed to *assume mortality* and *pay the penalty* for our sins. The Lamb of God came to earth *because of God's love*, but died suffering horribly on the Cross *because of God's hatred of sin*. If you have heard

8. The Lamb of God came to earth *because of* _____, but died suffering horribly on the Cross *because of God's* _____.
(Acts 8:33; 2:38; 3:19-20; 17:30-31; John 3:16; Psalms 5:5; 11:5-7; Hosea 9:15-17)

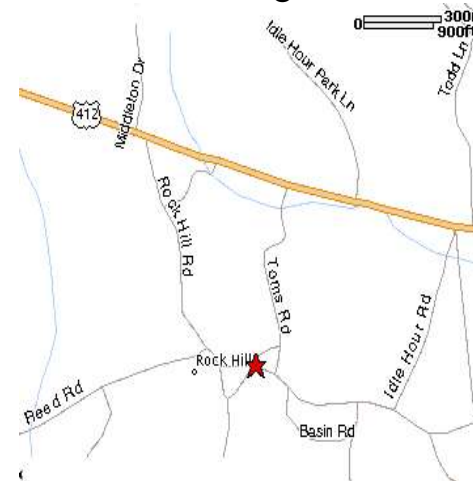
the Cross - the suffering and redemptive death of Jesus preached - and have rejected that great Salvation, then you yourself turn away from the *Immortal Love of the Infinite God* and choose the opposite instead. God *has a general love for the world*, but a *specific hate* of sin. See the Son, torn and bloody, hanging on yonder Tree, and see the hatred that God has for the sin and the unrepentant sinner. Even Israel, God's Chosen Nation, when they rejected God their Savior the Lord said:

Hosea 9:15-17 (KJV) "All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers. {16} Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. {17} My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers

among the nations."

How horrible to turn away from the Vine of Love, deliberately choosing the rotted cast off fruit of this world! This is not what God wants for you! The Great Love of God caused Philip to leave a *thriving revival* in Samaria to go into the desert of Gaza *for just one man*. That same Great Love of God reaches out to you this very day. What will you choose? The Ethiopian Eunuch chose to *turn away from the world* and to turn to salvation by faith in The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. The Eunuch accepted the Grace of God, a Grace that has been in the Mind of the Infinite long before you were born or this world was created, and was baptized - humbling himself before the Lord.

He humbled Himself for you - will you humble yourself for Him?¹⁰ May God touch your hearts and lead you to the Infinite through this message.



Rock Hill Baptist Church is located between Parsons and Lexington, Tennessee, on Highway 412. Look for our sign! We have services on Wednesdays (Adult, Youth, and children's Bible studies) at 6:00 and 7:00 PM, Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

¹⁰ see also Psalms 1:6; 78:56-64; Matthew 25:46