

**NCT Think Tank 2011**  
**Session Two - Tuesday, July 26, 2011**  
**LeTourneau Christian Camp, Rushville, New York**

A reading of Carl F. H. Henry's article "The Holy Spirit and Christian Ethics"<sup>1</sup> was done without divulging any information concerning the author, the date, or the source. The only way anyone was able to subsequently guess the identity of the author was due to my failure to issue a caveat against "Googling"!

Following this reading, and some discussion, the devotional study which follows was presented.

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<sup>1</sup> Eternity 8:3 (March 1957), pp. 16-17, 43-44. "This article is taken from a chapter of his latest book, **Christian Personal Ethics**, published by William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. Footnotes were omitted from this abridgment." (pg. 16) The article is from chapter 19, pp. 437-443 of the book. Note: For those who study Henry's work beyond this chapter do not be surprised if you find him inconsistent (as so many others are) when it comes to the role of the Old Covenant Law under the New Covenant, the issue of the "eternal moral law", and related subjects. That should not detract from the sound teaching found in this chapter and elsewhere.

***Five Words You Must Understand:  
This is My Beloved Son  
Matthew 3:17; 17:5***

**1 Corinthians 14:19**

***Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding,  
that by my voice I might teach others also,  
than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.***

**Introduction:**

Some of us grew up listening to Paul Harvey on the radio, and can remember him signing on with his signature greeting: “Hello, Americans! This is Paul Harvey! Stand by for news!”<sup>2</sup>

On the old *Daniels and Webster* radio program on ROCK107 FM in the valley where I live we often heard from a character named Walter Nepasky. He would begin his commentary in a distinctive coal cracker dialect with either, “I’m Walter Nepasky and today I wanna talk about tree tings”, or “Hi. My name is Walter Nepasky. How you doin? Today I want to talk to you about tree tings.”<sup>3</sup>

What if we had a modern Christian radio station (“The Rock of Ages 316”?) with a program that began, “Hi, I’m Paul of Tarsus, and today I want to talk about five words.”

1 Corinthians 14:19 - *Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*

This is Paul’s “druthers”! This is when 5 is better than 10,000! Here Paul follows up his extreme personal example with an extreme preference framed as a mathematical proportion: 5 versus 10,000. If Paul were here, and you could pin him down to a literal selection of five words, what do you think he would choose? “Gimme Five Paul!”

Here are “Five Words” that you need to understand!<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times* at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/02/business/media/02harvey.html?ref=obituaries> [accessed 3 AUG 2011]; New York print edition, March 2, 2009, pg. A16.

<sup>3</sup> See *iTunes Previews* at <http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/rock-107-walter-nepasky-podcast/id83911768> [accessed 3 AUG 2011].

<sup>4</sup> The five word statements from Scripture that follow may not be five word statements in the Koine Greek original, nor are they necessarily complete sentences or verses in the English language translations from the Koine, including the King James Version, from which these statements are drawn. Nevertheless, they were selected for the fundamental truths and span of doctrine that they present. This list of twenty-nine examples is not intended to be comprehensive, and may easily be expanded or consolidated.

**The Person of Christ – The Redeemer:**

“Before Abraham was I am.” (Jn. 8:58)  
“I am Alpha and Omega.” (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13)  
“I am the Good Shepherd.” (Jn. 10:11)  
“I am the True Vine.” (Jn. 15:1)  
“He is Lord of all.” (Ac. 10:36) [“Jesus Christ is *the* Lord.”]  
“This is My Beloved Son.” (Mt. 3:17; 17:5)  
“Behold the Lamb of God.” (Jn. 1:29)

**The Work of Christ (as Prophet, Priest and King) – Redemption Accomplished:**

“He called His Name Jesus.” (Mt. 1:25)  
“He shall bear their iniquities.” (Is. 53:11)  
“Christ died for our sins.” (1 Cor. 15:3)  
“He shall prolong His days.” (Is. 53:10)  
“He rose from the dead.” (1 Cor. 15:12)  
“I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33)  
“Sanctify them through the truth.” (Jn. 17:17)  
“He shall see His seed.” (Is. 53:10)

**The Salvation of Christ – Redemption Applied:**

“He shall save His people.” (Mt. 1:21)  
“Ye have not chosen Me.” (Jn. 15:16)  
“Peace I leave with you.” (Jn. 14:27)  
“By grace ye are saved.” (Eph. 2:5)  
“Ye must be born again.” (Jn. 3:7)  
“We have peace with God.” (Rom. 5:1)  
“My sheep hear My voice.” (Jn. 10:27)  
“Continue ye in My love.” (Jn. 15:9)

**The Return of Christ – Redemption Revealed:**

“We look for the Savior.” (Phil. 3:20) [“Jesus Christ is coming again.”]  
“Blessed is he that readeth.” (Rev. 1:3)  
“The time is at hand.” (Rev. 1:3; 22:10)  
“Behold, He cometh with clouds.” (Rev. 1:7)  
“I make all things new.” (Rev. 21:5) [“God wins in the end!”]  
“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22)

Here are “Five Words” that you need to understand: “This is my beloved Son!”

Outline:

The Occasions of the Pronouncement  
The Content of the Pronouncement  
The Significance of the Pronouncement

## I. The Occasions of the Pronouncement: The Baptism and Transfiguration of Christ

Matthew 3:17 - *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

The baptism of Christ is the divide between the 30 years and the 3 years.<sup>5</sup>

“the silent heavens broke into the language of a great music”<sup>6</sup>

“...God has now broken his silence, and is speaking directly to his people again in his beloved Son, Jesus, upon whom the Spirit has come (cf. 17:5).”<sup>7</sup>

This is “the most unmediated access to God’s own view of Jesus”.<sup>8</sup>

Chapter three marks the transition from John to Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

“...his baptism is not the occasion of his adoption into this relationship. Rather, the baptism is the occasion of Jesus’ recognition or ordination into his ministry as Israel’s Messiah.”<sup>10</sup>

### Synoptic parallels:<sup>11</sup>

Mark 1:9-11 – [9] And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. [10] And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: [11] And there came a voice from heaven, saying, **Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

Luke 3:22 - And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, **Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.**

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<sup>5</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, The Crises of the Christ (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1936, 1903), pp. 107-123. See also pp. 103-148 for Morgan’s full discussion of the baptism, and pp. 211-267 of the transfiguration.

<sup>6</sup> Morgan, op. cit., pp. 136.

<sup>7</sup> David L. Turner, Matthew, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pg. 120.

<sup>8</sup> R. T. France, The Gospel of Matthew, *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, eds. Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), pg. 122.

<sup>9</sup> Turner, op. cit., pg. 122.

<sup>10</sup> Turner, op. cit., pg. 120.

<sup>11</sup> Notice is taken of the difference in person in the pronouns and verbs in the announcement as recorded in Mark and Luke from the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular in Matthew to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular. When the Synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration are compared all have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular. Peter’s account in 2 Pet. 1:17 is also in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.

Matthew 17:5 - *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

**Synoptic parallels:**

Mark 9:7 - And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, **This is my beloved Son: hear him.**

Luke 9:35 - And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, **This is my beloved Son: hear him.**

“The worthies Moses and Elijah are only supporting actors in the drama of redemption. As the curtain falls, they have exited and Jesus alone stands at the center of the stage”.<sup>12</sup>

**Apostolic testimony:**

2 Peter 1:17-18 – [17] For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** [18] And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

**“cloud”:**

Exodus 24:15-16 – [15] And Moses went up into the mount, and **a cloud covered the mount.** [16] And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and **the cloud covered it** six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses **out of the midst of the cloud.**

**Shekinah:**

Exodus 13:21-22 – [21] And the Lord went before them by day in **a pillar of a cloud,** to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: [22] He took not away **the pillar of the cloud** by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Exodus 34:5-7 – [5] And the Lord descended **in the cloud,** and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. [6] And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, [7] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

1 Kings 8:10-13 – [10] And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that **the cloud filled the house of the Lord,** [11] So that the priests could not stand to

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<sup>12</sup> Turner, op. cit., pg. 420.

minister because of **the cloud**: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. [12] Then spake Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in thick darkness. [13] I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

### **Other occurrence of a voice from heaven besides Baptism and Transfiguration:**

“The Gospels record three occasions on which the invisible God spoke from heaven to acknowledge Jesus as his unique Son: at his baptism (Mark 1:10; cf. Matt. 3:16f.; Luke 3:21f.; John 1:32ff.); at his transfiguration (Matt. 17:5; cf. Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; cf. 2 Pet. 1:17); and shortly before the crucifixion (John 12:27-39).”<sup>13</sup>

John 12:28-30 – [28] Father, glorify thy name. **Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.** [29] The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. [30] Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

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<sup>13</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part Two (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), pp. 50-51.

## II. The Content of the Pronouncement: “This is my beloved Son”

### Prophetic background – Suffering Servant blended with Sonship:

Isaiah 42:1-4 – [1] **Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him:** he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. [2] He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. [3] A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. [4] He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Psalms 2:7 - I will declare the decree: **the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son;** this day have I begotten thee.

Luke 1:35 - And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also **that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.**

Genesis 22:2 - And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

### Citation of Isaiah 42:1 –

Matthew 12:18-21 - Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; **my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him,** and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. [19] He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. [20] A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. [21] And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

### Other Allusions to Isaiah 42:1 –

Luke 3:22 - And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, **Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.**

Luke 9:35 - And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, **This is my beloved Son:** hear him.

Luke 23:35 - And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be **Christ, the chosen of God.**

### Citations of Psalm 2:7 –

Acts 13:33 - God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.**

Hebrews 1:5 - For unto which of the angels said he at any time, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?** And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Hebrews 5:5 - So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, **Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.**

### Other Allusions to Psalm 2:7 –

Matthew 4:3 - And when the tempter came to him, he said, **If thou be the Son of God,** command that these stones be made bread.

Luke 3:22 - And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, **Thou art my beloved Son;** in thee I am well pleased.

John 1:49 - Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, **thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.**

### “Beloved”:

This term occurs 3X in Mt., all with reference to Christ; 61X in the NT, 27X in the Pauline corpus.<sup>14</sup>

“The Beloved” is an independent title directly related to that of “the Messiah”.

Col. 1:13 - Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of **his dear Son:**

Eph. 1:6 - To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in **the beloved.**

1 John 5:9 - If we receive the witness of men, **the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.**

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<sup>14</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew, Pillar Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), pg. 67.



### III. The Significance of the Pronouncement

#### “Behold”:

“The demonstrative particle *idou* is used by the evangelists not simply for vivacity of style but also to fix attention on the unexpected and even apparently impossible....“Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Matt. 3:17, RSV) is therefore paradigmatic; transcendent divine revelation is an awe-filled actuality that overtakes mankind through God’s personal initiative.”<sup>15</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> “and look” in the narrative (3, 5a, 5b) introduces the high point in the narrative.<sup>16</sup>

#### “Hear”

##### Old Covenant Law on “hear ye him”:

Deut. 18:15 - The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; **unto him ye shall hearken;**

Deut. 18:19 - And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.**

Acts 3:22-23 – [22] For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; **him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.** [23] And it shall come to pass, that **every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.**

##### The New Testament “unpacking of Moses’ prophecy in Deuteronomy:

Hebrews 1:1-4 – [1] God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, [2] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; [3] Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; [4] Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Hebrews 12:25 - See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

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<sup>15</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, Vol. II: God Who Speaks and Shows, Fifteen Theses, Part One (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), pg. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Leon Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 440.

Hear him with reference to what? Cp. Mt. 16:21-22. “It is significant that this endorsement occurs soon after...”<sup>17</sup>

Should it be limited to that? Should it necessarily be limited to anything in the immediate or larger context if Hebrews 1:1-4 and 12:25 are understood and appreciated?

### **Christ’s Sonship and ours:**

“The exclusive sonship that Jesus claims for himself is what enables all penitent sinners to experience moral and spiritual reconciliation with God. Jesus the “beloved Son” in whom the Father delights (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22, 12:32, etc.) introduces alienated sinners to the Father’s love which they may share through his mediatorial work. Those who believe in the redemptive life and work of the incarnate Logos, “the one and only Son” (John 1:14, 3:15, NIV), are empowered by the Spirit to become God’s sons (John 1:12f.); former moral and spiritual rebels may thus become true children of God.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

This is the place we and those we minister to need to come to or be brought to when we stray, when we seek answers, when we are confused. This is the touchstone of theology. This “unmediated” revelation is the “be all and end all” of all aspects of theology. This perspective should humble us and leave us where it left the Apostles, on their faces, humbled, on the ground.<sup>19</sup> When we “come down off the mountain” and do stupid things like the Apostles did, we need to be reminded, as they did, of where the good pleasure of the Father may be found, and who we are to hear, alone. In Christ alone. Hear Christ alone. “Behold” indeed!

Solo Christo, Soli Deo Gloria,

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<sup>17</sup> Turner, op. cit., pg. 418.

<sup>18</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, op. cit., VI:313.

<sup>19</sup> Mt. 17:6-7 – And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.