

### The Little Brown Church

I grew up in a small town where the local church was called “The Little Brown Church.” It was little, it was brown, and it was a church. The long time pastor of that church was a wonderful man named Herschell Harkins. Reverend Harkins was kindly, and old. At least, he looked very old to me when I was very young. As I got older, I found out I was not the only one struck by his appearance.

One day Reverend Harkins told me a story that must be common to a lot of older ministers. As the story goes, Reverend Harkins was standing by the door to the church after services had concluded, chatting with families as they left for the day. One young boy walked by holding his mother’s hand, staring awestruck up at Reverend Harkins. “Mommy,” he whispered, “is that God?”

“I’m not God,” Reverend Harkins told the boy. “But I work for him.”

We know that no human being can become God. But the Bible tells us of the time God Almighty became a man. This week’s study will help us understand Jesus as he really is, fully God and fully human.

#### Monday – Christ: God and Man (this first day is a review from last week’s Scrolls)

*“Jesus was God and man in one person, that God and man might be happy together again.”* George Whitefield

1. Please read Romans 9:5. What two assertions does Paul make about Jesus?
2. How does Matthew 1:1-16 support Paul’s statement that Jesus has human ancestry? Which of his ancestors’ names do you recognize? What do you know about them?
3. John 8:54-59 is often cited due to the statement that Jesus himself said he is God. How do his words “I am” in verse 58 support this statement, when seen in light of Exodus 3:13-14?

**Text Insight:** The people listening to Jesus certainly understood this to be an audacious and blasphemous claim. For that reason, they picked up stones (vs. 59), since blasphemy was punishable by immediate death.

#### Tuesday – The Patriarchs

**Text Insight** – The word, *patriarch* refers to the male head of a tribe or family. A woman in this role is a *matriarch*.

1. Read Romans 9:5. From whom does Paul say Jesus traces his human ancestry? Which patriarchs are listed in Matthew 1:2?
2. Genesis 32:3-12 contains one of the many episodes in the life of a patriarch. Which three patriarchs can you identify in verse 9? What is the importance of the promise Jacob mentions in verse 12?
3. Take a look at Matthew 8:5-13. What does this tell you about the application of Genesis 32:12 to us today?

**Making it Personal:** Jesus’ words in Matthew 8:11 assure us that God’s kingdom includes those who are not physically descended from Israel’s patriarchs. Take time to thank God that he has adopted you into his family with all the rights and privileges thereof.

#### Wednesday – The Anointed One of God

**Text Insight** – The word *Christ* comes from a Greek word for the Hebrew word *Messiah*. Both *Christ* and *Messiah* mean *Anointed One*, that is, chosen by God.

1. What does John 1:29-40 tell you about Jesus? How does this passage relate to Romans 9:5?
2. Please read Isaiah 11:1-11. What name is found in verse 1 as well as in Matthew 1:5-6? How does the Matthew passage connect Jesus to the prophecy found in Isaiah 11?
3. When the Old Testament mentions islands as in Isaiah 11:11, it is in reference to “the ends of the earth.” What will cover the whole world, including the “islands,” according to 11:9?

**Prayer Focus:** Pray, asking that the earth be “full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

#### Thursday – God Over All

*“Christ is not valued at all unless He is valued above all.”* Augustine (354-430 A.D.), Bishop of Hippo

1. What do you think the words “over all” mean in Romans 9:5?
2. Read Psalm 65:1-13 (with particular attention on verse 7), Psalm 89:8-9, and Job 38:1; 38:8-11. What power is ascribed to God in each passage?
3. Now take a look at Mark 4:35-41 and Psalm 107:27-30. What is the answer to the disciples’ question in Mark 4:41? How does that answer support Paul’s assertion about Jesus in Romans 9:5?

**Making it Personal:** Jesus’ act of calming the waves, when seen alongside these Old Testament descriptions of God, has been described as one of the many biblical proofs that Jesus is God. Are you convinced (whether by these passages or for another reason)? Why or why not?

#### Friday – Praise Forever

*“Oh Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.”* Psalm 51:15

1. What insight does Romans 9:5 give us about a proper response to Christ?
2. Please read Isaiah 6:1-7. What is the setting? What are the angels doing? What is Isaiah’s response? How does God make it possible for Isaiah to remain in his presence?

**Text Insight:** Fire (such as the burning coal in Isaiah 6) is often used as a metaphor in the Bible for the way God cleanses us, - in the same way that high heat is used to purify gold taken from the ground.

3. Take a look at Revelations 3:14-22 and identify the things God is willing to do for us. How do God’s people respond in Revelation 19:1-8? According to Revelation 19:9, does this benefit us as well?

**Digging Deeper:** The Bible often uses wedding and feasting imagery to describe our relationship with God. If you desire to dig deeper, read Psalm 23:5-6, Matthew 22:1-14 and Revelation 19:7. Then consider Christ’s love for his bride, the Church.

**For the Weekend:** Re-read Mark 4:35-41, Psalm 107:27-30 and Revelation 19:1-9. Give thought to who Jesus is, and what your response to him should be? Pray, asking God to guide you as you grow in that relationship.