Living Sermons

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

Luke 11:29-32

"Do you think you're what they say you are?"

BILLY GRAHAM

Portland Crusade, Portland, Oregon

Transcribed and Published by Livingsermons.com

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Preacher: Billy Graham

Publisher: LivingSermons.com

Watch Live Video Here

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Foreword

Some questions never grow old. “What think ye of Christ?” was asked in the days of the Gospels, it was asked from the stage of a rock opera in the last century, and it is being asked of you at this very moment. This book places that question before you through one of the most memorable messages in the Billy Graham Classic Sermon collection, “Jesus Christ Superstar.”

Drawing from Luke 11:29–32, where Jesus declares that He Himself is the sign this generation seeks, the preacher walks us through who Jesus is: fully man, yet sinless; the eternal Word made flesh; the Teacher who lifted the standard of human conduct; the Savior who bore the cross and cried, “It is finished”; and the risen Lord who is alive today. Along the way he reminds us that faith, which we exercise a hundred times a day, finds its highest and safest place in Jesus Christ.

As editor, my task has been a humble one. The message has not been altered. The words, illustrations and appeals are the preacher’s own, simply taken from the spoken form and arranged for the reader: set in clean paragraphs, gathered into chapters, and guided by subheadings so that the movement of the sermon is easy to follow and to return to.

Read this book slowly, with your Bible open beside you. Let the Scripture speak first, and let the preacher’s words lead you to the Person at the center of it all. If you are already a believer, may your love for Christ be refreshed and your witness strengthened. If you are still searching, may you hear the same invitation that rang out on that day: arise and come.

The sermon ends with a question that every reader must answer for themselves. May you answer it well.

Wisdom Epsi
— The Chief Editor, LivingSermons.com

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Publisher's Note

This book is a faithful transcript of a live sermon delivered by the preacher under the inspiration and unction of the Holy Spirit. Every effort has been made to preserve the preacher's exact words, tone, flow, and spiritual authority, while carefully proofreading and formatting the message into a clear and readable ebook format.

The message you are about to read was originally ministered in a live congregational setting. As such, it carries the weight, urgency, and atmosphere of that sacred gathering. Minor grammatical and structural adjustments have been made solely to enhance readability, without altering the substance, intent, or power of the original delivery.

Watch the live sermon from which this message was transcribed on YouTube

Livingsermons.com does not claim ownership of this message. All spiritual credit and ministerial authority belong to the preacher through whom the Word was delivered. Our role is that of stewards and editors—serving the Body of Christ by preserving and distributing life-giving messages in accessible digital formats. Our commitment is excellence without dilution.

Our standard is reverence for the Word of God. Our daily goal is to transform powerful live sermons into polished PDF and ebook editions for the edification of the Body of Christ. It is our prayer that as you read, the same grace, conviction, clarity, and impartation present in the live service will minister to you afresh.

— Livingsermons.com
A Spirit-led Publishing Stewardship

Main Message

Begins Here

The Sign Greater Than Jonah

Opening: Turning to the Word

Now today I want you to turn with me to Luke's Gospel, the eleventh chapter beginning with verse 29.

The Scripture Reading

Now the eleventh chapter and the 29th verse of Luke's Gospel:

> *"And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation. They seek a sign. And there shall be no sign given it but the sign of Jonah, the prophet. For as Jonah was a sign unto Nineveh, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them. For she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And behold a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And behold a greater than Jonah is here."*

Seeking True Wisdom

Now ancient Israel wanted Jesus to do something sensational to prove that He was really the Son of God. But Jesus is saying in this passage, you're seeking for a sign. All right, I'll give you a sign. I am the sign!

And Jesus was saying that the people of Jonah's day listened to the message of God and repented. And they're going to rise up at the judgment as witnesses against the people of Jesus' day that rejected Him.

He said, "The queen of the south recognized the wisdom of Solomon." But He said, "In Me you have a greater wisdom than all the wisdom of Solomon." He said, "You're blind. You cannot see the truth. You're deaf and you cannot hear the truth." He said, "I'm the truth. I'm the light of the world. I'm the sign." Now when you face Jesus, what is your reaction?

What Think Ye of Christ?

Our Reaction to Jesus

When you're confronted with Jesus Christ, what is your reaction?

The reaction of the scribes and the Pharisees was one of hostility. The people of Nineveh's day were humbled and repented when they faced and confronted God.

And the question that we all ask today is this question, what think ye of Christ?

A Rock Opera and a Generation's Question

There's a rock opera at the moment called "Jesus Christ Superstar." All over the country thousands of young people are talking about Christ. They can't escape Him.

There's a Broadway play right now entitled "Godspell," a musical version of St. Matthew's Gospel. There's a new movie right now called "Brother John" in which Sidney Poitier plays Jesus Christ in the form of an Alabama black man. The front cover of Life magazine a few weeks ago ran "Jesus Christ Superstar."

And this rock opera from England was confronting young people with one question, who is Jesus Christ? An 87-minute-long electronic probe into the life of Jesus. Who is Jesus?

The Haunting Chorus

And the opera concludes with the voice of Judas, coming back from the dead and still questioning who Jesus is. "Don't get me wrong," says Judas in the opera, "I only want to know." And then the haunting chorus follows, "Jesus Christ Superstar, do you think you're what they say you are?"

Jesus Christ, do you think you are what they say you are?

The Man Jesus

Completely Human

Well, we know some things about Him. We know He was a man. Jesus was completely human. He was representative of man, because the Bible says He was identified, He was numbered with the transgressors.

We know that He was hungry. We know He got thirsty. We know He got tired. We know that He had the joys of friendship. We know that He wept at the tomb of a dead loved one. We know that He had all of the characteristics of a man.

The Sinless One

And yet, very interestingly, the Bible says that He never committed a sin. In fact, He stood in front of the people of His generation and He said, “I’ve never committed a sin.” He said, “Have any of you, my neighbors, ever seen me commit a sin?” They couldn’t say a thing.

Now wouldn’t that be something? For a man to come along, 33 years of age, and say, “Who of you have ever seen me commit a sin?”

Well, I tell you, if I said that, all my team would jump straight up and say, “I have.” My wife’s here. All of us are sinners.

Tempted in Every Point

But Jesus was tempted in every point like as we are. He went through every temptation you’ve ever been through. There isn’t a trial or a testing or a temptation that Jesus has not been through before you, and He resisted them and overcame them all. Everyone. He was a man. Just like you.

The Claim of Divinity

The Unique, Only Begotten Son

But He was more than that. He claimed to be the unique, only begotten, incarnate Son of God. In fact, He claimed pre-existence. The Scripture says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” Before time began He existed.

He said, “Before Abraham was, I am. I am in eternal existence.” No wonder they got angry. No wonder they threw stones at Him. No wonder they tried to kill Him. And no wonder they eventually did crucify Him. He stood and said, “I am God!” Was He?

Peter’s Confession

Was He who He claimed to be? The Son of the living God. One day He asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I am?” And Peter answered and said, “Well, some of them say you’re John the Baptist come back, or you’re Jeremiah, or you’re Elijah.”

He said, “I’m really not interested in what the people say. I’m interested, Peter, in what you say. What do you say?” Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said, “Peter, you’ve done well. You’ve passed your examination. But Peter, those are not your thoughts. Those thoughts came from God. It has been revealed to you by God.” Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of the living God.

The Word Made Flesh

And you know, at His incarnation, or His birth, that was not His birth. That wasn’t the beginning, that wasn’t the origin of Jesus. That was the beginning of His incarnation. Because He has always existed, from everlasting to everlasting He is God, the Bible says.

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” In other words, the Logos, the Word of God, the eternal God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and lived like a man among us. That’s what the Bible teaches. And when you come to Jesus Christ you have to accept that. He wasn’t just another revolutionary. He wasn’t just another hippie. He was not just another great man. He was God in the flesh.

Forgiveness Without Limit

And oh, the ethics that He taught. Never a man spake like that man. “When you get hit on one side,” He says, “turn the other cheek.” He never said what to do after that. But He did say forgive 70 times 7. Count that up. How about the little irritations from your wife or your husband? Seventy times 7 you forgive.

My wife once said that the secret of a happy marriage is two good forgivers. And that’s what it is. Two good forgivers. People that can forgive each other. Jesus taught that we’re to forgive. He taught a revolution in the way we’re to live.

The Judgment of Inward Thoughts

He taught us that it wasn’t just our outward actions that Jesus judges, but it’s the inward thoughts and intents. He said, “Moses said, in the Ten Commandments, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that if you even look on a woman to lust after her you’ve already committed it.” He said, “Moses said, ‘Thou shalt not murder.’ But I tell you, if you have hate in your heart against your brother without cause you’re already guilty.”

He lifted man’s ethics to the highest plane and demanded that we live that kind of a life.

The Death He Died

The Suffering of the Savior

And then look at the death He died. Did ever a man die like Jesus? The lightning flashed and the thunder roared and the earth began to shake. And even the soldiers confessed that this must be the Son of God. Anyone that can see Jesus on that cross and not be touched has a heart of stone.

They first took off His clothes. Then they took long leather thongs with steel pellets or lead pellets on the end and beat Him across the back until He could hardly stand up. Then they put a crown of thorns on His brow, and His face was bleeding. And they laughed at Him and they spit on Him and they mocked Him.

The Rescue He Refused

And with one snap of His fingers 72,000 angels had already drawn their swords, ready to come to His rescue and wipe this planet out of existence in the universe. And Jesus said, “No, to this end was I born.” And He dragged and lifted and hauled that cross.

A Savior for Every Nation

And don’t you black people ever forget one thing. The man that helped Jesus carry that cross was a black man. And don’t ever forget another thing. Jesus belongs to Africa as much as He does to Europe and Asia.

He was born in that part of the world that touches Africa and Asia and Europe. And Jesus was not a white man like me. Nor was He as black as some of you. We don’t know what the color of His skin was. But it must have been a dark color like the people of His day, because He was a man like them.

Don’t ever say it’s a white man’s religion or a black man’s religion. It’s a world religion. He belongs to the world.

The Meaning of the Cross

"Father, Forgive Them"

When He died on that cross, they nailed Him, they put the nails in His hands. And you know what He said? "Forgive them, they know not what they do." Forgive them.

Could you forgive somebody that's putting nails in your hands and you know you didn't deserve it? He didn't squirm. He didn't yell. He didn't scream. He just took it and said, "Lord, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing." That's how He confronted the violence of His day.

The Finished Work

And then on the cross He said, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And then He dropped His head and said, "It's finished." What did He mean? He meant your plan of salvation is finished. God can now forgive you of all your sins because Jesus had finished God's plan for your salvation.

Because you see, God knows every one of you by name. He has the hairs of your head numbered. God looks upon you as though you were the only person in the whole universe. He sees you and you alone.

And on that cross Jesus had the capacity to think of you. And He loved you enough to stay on the cross. Was there ever such a love as that, when He could have been rescued and taken back to heaven to sit on His throne? But He didn't.

The Joy Set Before Him

He said, "No, I'm doing it for the joy that is set before me." Because He saw that He would be raised from the dead. He saw that there would be a gathering in the generations to come of a people for His name that would make up His body. He saw the day when we will reign with Him in His kingdom. Yes, they laid Him away in a tomb.

He Is Risen

Beyond the Tomb

And that's where "Jesus Christ Superstar" leaves Him. But out in Kansas City some people got hold of the rock opera and they carried it right on to the next step, the resurrection. And if you don't have the resurrection you don't have any gospel. Jesus Christ is alive.

And when they went out to the tomb that morning they heard the greatest news the world has ever known, "He is not here, He is risen!" He is alive today. And the thing that inspired the disciples to turn the world upside down in their day was the resurrection. They went everywhere declaring that "Jesus is alive."

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord

If Jesus claimed to be God knowing He wasn't God, then He's a liar. And we will have to say, "Jesus, you're a liar. You're a fraud and a hoax and you're the biggest fraud in the history of the human race."

Or if Jesus thought He was God and did not know the difference, then He desperately needed mental help. He needed several psychiatrists.

The third alternative is that He was who He claims to be, God in the flesh. I believe that the evidence is overwhelming that He is who He claims to be, the Son of the living God. But I cannot prove it scientifically.

Faith: The Bridge to Knowing

Proof in Transformed Lives

But I can prove it by the lives that He transforms every day. I can prove it because in my heart I don't say, "I think, I hope." I say, "I know!"

The Faith We Live By Every Day

And you know there's another element in our lives that we don't think much about, and that's the element of faith. You think of the faith that you have to have every day. You have to have faith that your wife didn't put poison in your coffee this morning. You have to have faith in her. She might have felt like it, but she didn't.

You have to have faith in the bank when you write a check and sign it and you have money in the bank. You have to have faith that the bank's gonna pay it.

You have to have faith in the government when you pull out a dollar bill. Now I know it's shrinking, but you have faith that back of it is a dollar. That people will accept it as money. Everything we do is by faith.

Now for example, when I come upon a hill, and I live in the mountains of North Carolina and we have a lot of hills, I don't stop my car before I get to the crest of the hill and get out and walk over and see if somebody's coming up the other side on the wrong side. I have faith to believe that the drivers are gonna stay on their side. Faith, faith, faith! Everything.

When you sat in that chair, had you ever sat in that chair before? I bet you didn't pick it up and examine it and put your hands on it to see if it would hold you. By faith you just sat down in it. You had faith that people wouldn't build a chair that wouldn't hold you. Everything we do is by faith.

Placing Your Faith in Christ

All right, take the same faith, put it in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you will know who Jesus is. You accept Him by faith! And He comes into your life and into your heart and you know that He's who He claims to be.

Arise and Come

The Question of Damascus Road

On that Damascus road that I referred to a moment ago, the apostle Paul said, “Who art thou, Lord?” And then Paul asked Him another question. Paul said, “What do you want me to do, Lord?” And Jesus said, “Arise and go.”

I’m asking you today to arise and come to Him. Now some of you can ridicule. Some of you can reject Him. Some of you can put it off and say I’m gonna wait till another time. Or you can accept Him as your Lord and your Savior and your Master and the Son of God. And He will come into your heart and forgive your sin and change your life.

More Than a Rock Opera

“Jesus Christ Superstar,” Judas, “Don’t get me wrong, I only want to know,” he said. And then the haunting chorus, “Jesus Christ Superstar, do you think you are what they say you are?” Yes! And more, ten thousand times more, than two men in England ever put in those lyrics is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and you are asked today to receive Him.

Receive Him Today

In fact, if you’re going to go to heaven, the Bible teaches you have to receive Him. If you’re going to have your sins forgiven you have to receive Him. And I’m going to ask you to do it today. And I’m going to ask you to do it publicly. How do you do it?

I’m going to ask hundreds of you to get up out of your seat right now and come and stand in front of this platform quietly and reverently. And say, “I want Christ in my heart. I want Him to forgive my sin. I want to know I’m going to heaven. I want Him to change my life. I receive Him as my Lord and Savior.”

Why Come Forward?

If you’re with friends or relatives or in a delegation, they’ll wait. If you’ve come in a bus, they’ll wait. Why do I ask you to come forward? Because every person Jesus ever called in the New Testament, He called publicly. You come publicly and openly and declare yourself.

You may be Protestant, you may be Catholic, you may be Jewish, you may be Orthodox or you may not have any religion. But God has spoken to you today and you know that you need Christ. You come and make sure right now. We're going to wait.

And I'm going to ask that no one leave the service please, not at this holy moment. I know you want to go because of the crowd, but don't leave. Just get up and come right now. Quickly from everywhere. Hundreds of you. We're going to wait. From all over the stadium as God is speaking.

You may be in the choir and this may be your last moment with God. You may never have another hour like this. You come.

The Invitation Continues

Responding Where You Are

As hundreds are responding to Mr. Graham's invitation to make a public commitment to Jesus Christ, you can make that same commitment right where you are. Just pick up the phone and call the number you see on your screen. Special friends are waiting to talk with you and pray with you about this most important decision.

And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

Though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt
Fightings and fears within, without
O Lamb of God, I come, I come

You're watching the Billy Graham Classics. Please call the phone number on the screen right now for spiritual help and guidance.

To Those Watching at Home

You that are watching by television, there are hundreds of people coming here at McCormick Place in Chicago to make their commitment to Jesus Christ, to accept Him as their Lord, their Savior, as their Master, as the Son of the living God. I'm going to ask you to make that same commitment where you are at home. I'm praying that you'll make that decision. God help you to do it. And I'll hope that you'll go to church next Sunday. God bless you.

Next Steps

If you just prayed that prayer with my father, or if you have any questions about a relationship with Jesus Christ, why don't you call the number on the screen. There will be someone there to talk with you, pray with you and answer those questions. And remember, God loves you!

If you would like to commit your life to Jesus Christ, please call us right now, toll free at 1-877-772-4559. That's 1-877-772-4559. Or you can write to us at: Billy Graham, 1 Billy Graham Parkway, Department C, Charlotte, NC 28201. Or you can contact us on the web 24/7 at peacewithgod.tv. We'll get the same helps to you that we give to everyone who responds at the invitation.

On behalf of Franklin Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, thank you for watching and thank you for your prayers.

A Final Word

(Billy Graham) There's only one way, only one hope.

(Franklin Graham) We still have a window of opportunity to reach a lost and dying world with the truth of God's love. It's not too late. We've got an opportunity to tell others about Jesus Christ. What are you going to do with it?



About The Speaker

William "Billy" F. Graham Jr. (1918–2018) was raised on a dairy farm in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1934, at age 15, he made a commitment to faith during a revival led by Mordecai Ham. He was ordained in 1939, graduated from Florida Bible Institute in 1940, and earned a B.A. from Wheaton College in 1943, where he married Ruth McCue Bell.

After pastoring in Illinois and serving as the first full-time evangelist for Youth for Christ International, Graham was vaulted into national prominence by the 1949 Los Angeles Crusade. This event launched decades of global outreach, including historic, extended crusades in London (1954), New York City (1957), Seoul (1973), and Rio de Janeiro (1974). Overall, he preached live to nearly 215 million people in over 185 countries and territories.

In 1950, he founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). Through BGEA, Graham hosted the syndicated *Hour of Decision* radio program for over 60 years, published *Decision* magazine, and authored 33 books—including bestsellers such as *Angels: God's Secret Agents* (1975) and his 1997 autobiography, *Just As I Am*.

A counselor to U.S. presidents, Graham appeared on Gallup's "Ten Most Admired Men in the World" list a record 61 times. His honors include the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1983), Congressional Gold Medal (1996), and an Honorary Knighthood (2001). Following his passing in 2018 at age 99, he lay in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, and a bronze statue of him was added to the U.S. Capitol in 2024. Billy and Ruth raised five children, 19 grandchildren, 44 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren.

About Living Sermons

Our Vision

To become the world's largest digital archive for ebooks transcribed from live sermons, preserving and spreading the spoken Word of God across nations and generations.

Our Mission

At LivingSermons.com, our mission is to take the living voice of God spoken through His servants and transform it into accessible PDF resources, making salvation-centred truth available to the ends of the earth. We believe that the spoken Word carries divine power, and by preserving these messages in written form, we help extend their reach beyond pulpits, borders, and generations.

Why We Exist

Many life-changing sermons are preached and forgotten while some deteriorate over time. We exist to preserve these divine utterances, making them available for study, meditation, discipleship, and spiritual growth. Through this work, we are committed to ensuring that no revelational truth is lost, but that every inspired message can continue to speak, heal, transform, and bring men into the knowledge of Christ.

We Are Social

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YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/@OfficialLivingSermons

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LivingSermons is raising Kingdom-minded volunteers across the world to help transform live sermons into lasting digital resources. If you have the burden to serve and the skill to contribute, there is a place for you. Let us preserve God's spoken Word together and take the Gospel further.

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- **Language Translators:** Help translate sermons into different languages so more people can access the truth.
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