

Exalting Jesus, The Son of God

"The Deity of Christ"

INTRODUCTION:

- I. Last week, as we began our series of studies in the Gospel of John, we took a brief overview of this wonderful book meant to exalt Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
 - A. But today, I want us to step across the threshold of John's Gospel.
 1. When we do, we suddenly see that the first eighteen verses of John chapter one is a PROLOGUE – an INTRODUCTION – and is said by many commentators to be the most dazzling and scintillating writing in the entire New Testament.
 2. In his prologue John introduces us to FIVE PROOFS to the deity of Jesus Christ – five pieces of EVIDENCE that shows Jesus is truly divine – and all five proofs are found in the first eighteen verses.
 3. John testifies that Jesus:
 - a. Is eternal (vs. 1-2).
 - b. Is the Creator (vs. 3).
 - c. Gives spiritual life and light (vs. 4-9).
 - d. Came into the world to manifests glory (vs. 10-17).

- e. Came to explain the nature and character of God (v. 18).
- B. And so, for the remainder of our time this morning I want us to take a closer look at these five proofs – these five propositions – set forth by John to establish the divinity of Jesus Christ.
- 1. From the very beginning, John does two things:
 - a. First, John establishes the "GODHOOD" of Jesus – meaning that Jesus is as much entitled to be called "God" as the Father.
 - b. And second, John shows us that Jesus is EQUAL to the Father, and yet He was willing to SUBMIT Himself to the Father's will to bring about the redemption of the whole human race.
 - 2. While the gospel of Mark takes us back to the beginning of the MINISTRY of Jesus, and the gospels of Matthew and Luke take us back to the BIRTH of Jesus, John's Gospel takes us back to before the BEGINNING OF TIME.

Body:

- I. As we look upon the first words penned by the apostle John, we read of the Son of God in ETERNITY – even before the beginning of time.

- A. Alluding to the creation account found in Genesis chapter one, John establishes the DEITY of Jesus Christ by giving us a glimpse of Him BEFORE the foundations of the worlds.
1. **John 1:1-2** – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.*
 - a. As we step across the threshold of John's Gospel, these first 24 words immediately transport us through time to eternity past.
 - b. In eternity – before MAN, before CREATION, before TIME ITSELF – there existed the everlasting, triune GOD.
 - c. Suddenly, we've come into the presence of God the FATHER, God the SON, and as we will soon see, God the HOLY SPIRIT.
 2. The psalmist writes this as he contemplates the eternal grandeur and glory of the Lord.
 - a. **Psalms 90:1-2** – *Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*
- B. But I want you to take special notice of how John describes the deity of Jesus Christ, whom John calls "*the Word.*"

1. There are three things John wants us to know about Jesus:
 - a. First, He WAS in the beginning – meaning, when we mark the beginning of time, Jesus already WAS. He existed BEFORE the beginning, which is just another way of saying Jesus had no beginning – He always WAS.
 - b. Second, He was WITH GOD – meaning, he simply didn't preexist somewhere, He was WITH God, sharing the stage with God, existing in the same place God exists – heaven.
 - (1). In fact, John seems to emphasize this point by repeating it in **verse 2** – *"He was in the beginning with God."*
 - c. And third, Jesus WAS GOD – meaning, He is entitled to be called GOD, because He IS as much a divine being as God the Father.
 - (1). He possesses the same divine NATURE as the Father.
 - (2). He possesses the same divine CHARACTER as the Father.
 - (3). He possesses EQUALITY with the Father in every way.
 - (4). He is no less God than the Father.
2. Sadly, there are some religious people who DENY the true IDENTITY and the true DEITY of Jesus Christ.
 - a. They either CONFUSE the Son with the Father by claiming the two are the SAME PERSON – such as the Oneness

Pentecostals and others who deny a triune nature of the Godhead.

- b. Or they DENY the deity of Jesus Christ by claiming He is NOT EQUAL with Jehovah God, the Father. They claim Jesus is merely a created being like the angels of heaven, making Him one of many little gods (with a small "g").
 - c. The Jehovah's Witnesses do this. In fact, they have even gone so far as to publish their own Bible called *The New World Translation* in which **John 1:1** reads: *In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.*
 - d. If there was ever a religious group that BLASPHEMES the deity of Jesus Christ it's the Jehovah's Witnesses and their New World Translation.
3. However, the Word of God boldly claims the deity of Jesus Christ by saying: **John 1:1-2** – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.*
 4. The Bible boldly claims, "*The Word was God!*"

II. But as we read further, John speaks of Jesus Christ, the CREATOR.

A. John says this of Jesus:

1. **John 1:3** – *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*
2. How many of us realize when we read **Genesis 1:1** – *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* – that we are reading about Jesus Christ?
 - a. He was there, creating everything we know – taking an active role in the creation process alongside the Father and the Spirit.
3. The apostle Paul also affirms this great truth about Jesus. He wrote:
 - a. **Colossians 1:15-17** – *He [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*
4. The writer of the book of Hebrews (believed by many to have been the apostle Paul) opens his wonderful discourse with these words:
 - a. **Hebrews 1:1-2** – *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has*

appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. . .

5. In the book of Revelation, this same apostle John, paints a glorious scene of Jesus seated on His throne, and before Him the 24 elders bow down and cast their crowns before Him, saying:

- a. **Revelation 4:11** – *"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."*

6. Then, once again in Revelation, John sees an angel of the Lord who raises his hand to heaven:

- a. **Revelation 10:6** – *and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it. . .*

- B. Think about this for a moment.

1. When Jesus was nailed to an old rugged cross hewn from the wood of a tree, it was from a tree He had created.
2. When His hands and feet were nailed with spikes formed from metals in the earth, they were metals He had created.
3. And when Jesus was spit upon and mocked by men as He hung between heaven and earth, they were men to whom Jesus had given life.

4. In other words, Jesus created the instruments of His own crucifixion some four thousand years earlier at the beginning of time.
- III. Not only does John present Jesus Christ as God the Son and the Creator, John says Jesus is the source of all LIFE AND LIGHT – both PHYSICAL life, as well as SPIRITUAL life and enlightenment.
- A. Jesus is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, the light that gives LIFE to men.
 1. He is the light that came forth from heaven to shine in a dark and dreary world lost in sin.
 2. But sadly, the world in its spiritual darkness didn't comprehend or understand this light.
 - B. To make sure everyone understood of whom John is speaking, the apostle distinguishes Jesus from His cousin John the Immerser by making it clear that John was simply the MESSENGER sent to PREPARE THE WAY for Jesus Christ.
 1. **John 1:6-9** – *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

2. Do you see how many times the apostle John mentions the word "*LIGHT*" in these verses? Five times in these four verses.
3. It should come as no surprise that Jesus would be compared to "*Light*" when you consider four important things the apostle John says about Jesus, the Light.
 - a. First, Jesus Christ is the source of all SPIRITUAL LIGHT, and the only One who can help us see our way through this dark world.
 - b. Second, Jesus Christ is a Light that OVERPOWERS DARKNESS – He shines in darkness. It's NOT that men couldn't SEE that Light. Many didn't UNDERSTAND who Jesus truly was, and therefore REJECTED the Light.
 - c. Third, Jesus Christ is the TRUE LIGHT – He is genuine. He's the real thing. He truly IS the Son of God.
 - d. And fourth, Jesus Christ is the true Light to offers spiritual enlightenment to EVERY MAN. As we will see later in the Gospel of John, Jesus not only came to be a Light to the people of Israel, but also to the entire human race.
- C. Let me pause here to make an important point about Jesus being the Light or the World.

1. A public utility company like Chugach Electric provides electricity to every home in ITS coverage area in the same way Jesus Christ provides light to everyone who is IN HIM.
2. The apostle Paul, writing to Christians in Corinth, said: **2**
Corinthians 4:6 – *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
 - a. If you want the light of Christ to shine in your heart, and give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, then you must be IN CHRIST.
3. You can admire and even appreciate the beauty of a brilliant sunlit day by looking out a window from inside a darkened room.
4. But you can never truly benefit from the warmth and healing powers of sunlight until you finally step out of darkness and into that sunlight.
5. The same is true of the warmth and spiritual healing that comes from the light of Christ – you must be IN CHRIST to reap its benefits.

IV. But as John continues, he speaks of Jesus Christ manifesting, or revealing, His GLORY – the glory of the only begotten Son of God.

- A. To be the Light of the world, and to give life spiritual life to all mankind, the Son of God needed to DO something that had never been done since time began.
1. He needed to come to earth in the form of a MAN, live a perfectly sinless life among the human race He created, die on the cross for the sins of all humankind, be resurrected from the dead, and return to His place in heaven at the right hand of God having authority over all creation, and head over His church.
 2. To understand all the implications of God the Son taking on Himself the form of a MAN is nearly impossible for our finite minds to fully comprehend.
 3. However, while Jesus was on the earth, the Bible says He was fully GOD while at the same time fully MAN – not half and half – but DEITY and HUMANITY blended together in a man known as Jesus from Nazareth.
 4. The apostle Paul affirmed this same wonderful truth about the deity of Jesus: **Philippians 2:5-8** – *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

- a. How do you get your mind around that? How can you explain that Jesus Christ was God the Son wrapped in human flesh?
 - b. How can we grasp the full meaning of deity and humanity coexisting together in the same body?
 - c. How can we fathom the reality of that same God-Man being willing to be nailed to a cross by men whom He had created in His own image?
 - d. How can we unravel the mystery of God the Son dying on a cross, only to be resurrected from the dead three days later?
5. The good news is we don't have to unravel that mystery, or fathom that reality, or grasp the full meaning of deity and humanity coexisting together in the man Jesus.
6. All we are asked to do is believe it, because Jesus claimed it, God affirmed it, and John testified of it in his Gospel as he was guided by the Holy Spirit.
- a. We'll have a lot more to say about this in upcoming lessons.
- B. But going back to John's Gospel, just look at what the apostle John wrote about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

1. **John 1:10-14** – *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*
13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
2. There are several things John reveals here for us that we need to understand – as best we can.
 - a. Up to this point John has never mentions Jesus by name. He referred to the Son of God as "*the Word*" (**John 1:1**), as "*God*" (**John 1:1**), as the Creator (**John 1:3**), as the source of both physical and spiritual Life, and the source of spiritual Light (**John 1:4-9**).
 - b. This One of whom John speaks was "*in the world*" – He came into the world that He had created – and yet "*the world did not know Him.*" In other words, the world did not accept Him as God the Son.
 - c. He even "*came to His own*" – to the Jewish people – by being born through a Jewish mother who could trace her lineage

back to Abraham. And yet, even *"His own did not receive Him."* They not only REJECTED Him, they nailed Him to a CROSS.

- d. However, to those who DID receive Him as God the Son, He gave them *"the RIGHT to become children of God"* through a new birth – a spiritual birth.
3. Finally, this One whom John called *"the Word"* back in **John 1:1**, John now says in **verse 14**: *"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*
4. When we look upon *"the Word"* that *"became flesh and dwelt among us"* we see *"HIS GLORY."*
 - a. The word *"GLORY"* speaks of the blinding radiance, brilliance and splendor of God Himself – the same blinding radiance and brilliance we would see if we stood gazing straight into the sun that gives light and warmth to the earth.
 - b. The word *"GLORY"* is often used together with the word *"HONOR"* when speaking of God – *"honor and glory"* – which simply means God is worthy of all honor and worship because He is the glorious God of heaven and earth.
5. And so, in this verse (**verse 14**) John affirms that *"the Word"* which was *"made flesh"* and *"dwelled among us"* – the Son of God –

shares the SAME GLORY AND SPLENDOR of God the Father because He is *"the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

- C. And to ensure that no one would misunderstand of whom John was speaking, he adds this about the testimony of John the baptizer:
 - 1. **John 1:15-17** – *John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*
 - 2. There you have it – the very first time the apostle John calls *"the Word"* by the name of *"Jesus Christ."*
 - a. Jesus is *"Christ"* which means *"the Anointed One,"* or Jesus *"the Messiah."*
 - b. Jesus is the One anointed to be the Messiah, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind.

- V. But, there's one more thing the apostle John wants us to know about Jesus Christ, and that is Jesus EXPLAINED THE FATHER.
 - A. If it weren't for Jesus, we would never truly understand the true nature and character of God the Father.

1. **John 1:18** – *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*
 - a. John establishes a fundamental truth – *"no one has seen God at any time."*
 - b. Moses saw the glory of God – the blinding brilliance and splendor of God – but never saw the face of God.
 - c. We can see the handiwork of God all around us in creation – in the sun, the moon, the stars, and the magnificent earth on which we live – but none of us have looked upon the face of God.

2. But John says, *"the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."*
 - a. Jesus Christ – the *"only begotten Son"* has *"DECLARED"* God to us. Jesus has REVEALED God to us.
 - b. When we look at JESUS, we see GOD.
 - c. When we look at the nature and character of JESUS, we are looking at the nature and character of GOD.
 - d. Remember, Jesus is God the Son wrapped in human flesh.

- B. Later in our study of John we're going to come across two magnificent conversations – one between Jesus and His ENEMIES, and the other between Jesus and His DISCIPLES – especially His disciple Philip.

1. In the conversation Jesus had with His ENEMIES, He boldly proclaimed that He and the Father were ONE:
 - a. **John 10:30-33** – *"I and My Father are one." 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."*
 - b. Jesus had every right to claim EQUALITY with the Father because both He AND the Father ARE GOD – they are BOTH divine in nature and character; they are BOTH deity.
 - c. And the enemies of Jesus – the Jewish religious leaders – understood EXACTLY what Jesus was saying. Jesus was claiming EQUALITY with God.

2. In the second conversation, Jesus was meeting for the last time with His DISCIPLES – just hours away from the cross. Among the disciples are Thomas and Philip:
 - a. **John 14:6-10** – *Jesus said to him [Thomas], "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. 7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have*

seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?

- b. What a shock that must have been to Philip – to be told by Jesus that when you SEE ME, you SEE THE FATHER.
 - c. This does NOT mean Jesus and the Father are the same person. They are two separate persons in the Godhead.
 - d. But what it DOES mean is that God the Father's loving-kindness, and mercy, and grace, and tenderness, and compassion are ALSO seen in the loving-kindness, mercy, grace, tenderness and compassion of Jesus Christ.
- C. When we see JESUS, we see the FATHER. They both have the same divine nature and character.
- 1. And, therefore, the only way we can come to truly know the nature and character of GOD THE FATHER is to look at the person of JESUS, THE SON OF GOD – the Word that was made flesh, and dwelled among us – the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

CONCLUSION:

- I. Welcome to the Gospel of John!
 - A. Now do you see why I said in the first lesson, when we cross the threshold of John's Gospel, we might feel compelled to remove our shoes, for truly the ground upon which we are now standing is holy ground.
 1. In the first eighteen verses of John chapter one, we have stepped into the very presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - a. We are gazing – not at a burning bush in the desert out of which the voice of God speaks.
 - b. We are gazing into the very face of God in the person of Jesus Christ, who speaks to us today through His holy and divinely inspired Word – the New Testament of Jesus Christ.
 - B. We are standing in the presence of God on holy ground when we stand in the presence of Jesus Christ.
 1. He is the eternal Son of God, the Creator, the Source of life and spiritual light, the One who manifested the glory of God, and the One who revealed the true nature and character of God.
 2. But even more importantly, He is the One through whom WE can become SONS OF GOD – as long as we BELIEVE on His name, and are BORN AGAIN by the will of God.

- C. Jesus Christ is giving you that opportunity this morning – to BELIEVE on His name, and be BORN AGAIN by the will of God.
1. But He demands more than simply BELIEF – He demands a belief that will motivate you to DO what He commands you to do.
 - a. In our studies through the gospel of John we will learn that Jesus requires ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE.
 - b. He requires you to come to Him in FAITH, REPENTING of your sin, CONFESSING His name, and that you then be BAPTIZED – IMMERSED – in water for the remission of your sins.
 - c. And He requires that you CONTINUE to live faithfully to Him all the days of your life.
 2. If you haven't done this – if you haven't been baptized into Christ for the remission of your past sins, or haven't lived faithfully as His disciple – then you must do something about that now.
 3. Jesus offers you the promise of freedom from sins, and the hope of eternal life. All you need to do is simply come forward, and accept that promise on His terms.