

43. Jesus in John – Part 2

October 26, 2017

While Karen and I were in Prescott, I was flipping TV channels. I watched the latter part of the movie “Thor.” The characters – Thor himself, his father, and his evil brother are all supposed to be gods. But they also have enemies against them. I started to chuckle at their puny struggles, because the story line reminded me of the Greek mythology that I learned when I was in my college as a part of our English textbook. Those gods and goddesses of Greek were living in the life of a soap opera. They had trouble just like any one of us. They ain’t gods, but our God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Almighty God with no equal enemy.

That supreme Deity chose to extend His grace to us through His Son Jesus so that we may have eternal life in Him. In my opinion, John 1:14-18 explains so much about His salvation plan and the identity of Jesus and it sums up the Book of John very well.

A. GOD DWELT AMONG US

John 1:14 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.

Like no other religion in the world, our God came down and dwelt among sinful men and women. History is filled with the people who thought they were gods. But only one God of Christianity would be a Man.

I asked you to underline the word ‘dwelt’. This word in Greek is ‘skenoō’. It literally means “have one’s tabernacle, abide (or live) in a tabernacle (or tent), tabernacle”. If you were with us when we studied the Book of Exodus, you might remember the Tabernacle in the wilderness while the Israelites were traveling throughout the Sinai Peninsula.

The outer material of the Tabernacle was made out of badger skins which means it looked like any other average humble tent from a distance. But once you look inside of the Tabernacle, it was ornated with pure gold and beautiful tapestries. It is such a great representation of Jesus – He was an ordinary looking man in a human body from outside like any other Jew in the first century, but He was fully God inside without a question.

The tabernacle was a temporary place where man could meet with God. Since we couldn’t go to God because of our sinful nature from birth, He came to us.

Let’s go back to v14 again. Did you notice the word ‘became’? The apostle John was careful to use this word instead of “was born” or “was created”. John wants us to know that God the Father did not create Jesus out of nothing, like everything else He did including us.

The Word, who is Jesus, became a man. This is a very, very simple statement, yet it is the most profound one in all of history. Think about it. Infinity became finite; the invisible now is visible; eternity is now squeezed into a limit of time; the supernatural is confined by the natural. A.T. Robertson, the greatest Greek scholar of the 20th Century said, “This is beyond the power of interpretation.” Apostle Paul elaborated on it for us:

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Let's go back to v14 again. Note the word 'beheld' in Greek is 'theaomai' from which we get an English word 'theater'. It means "view attentively, contemplate". It is more than watching or looking at someone or something without thinking. John and the rest of the disciples intensively watched Him, studied His move, His words, and the way He lived while He was with them.

The greatest gift from God was God Himself wrapped in human skin. "The Word became flesh."

B. GOD'S SUPREMACY

John 1:15 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.'"

John the Baptist was actually born six months before Jesus according to Luke 1:36. So in this statement he is referring to our Lord's preexistence, not His birth date.

Jesus is the only Person who ever lived before He was born. Some may say, "That is not possible." I would say, "You got it. It is not possible for man, but for God nothing is impossible."

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

As Americans and Gentiles, we don't get the full meaning like the Jews. Remember when Moses asked the Lord for His name:

Exodus 3:13-14 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

When Jesus answered the Pharisees in this way in the eighth chapter of John, the Pharisees knew exactly what Jesus meant – claiming Himself to be God. That was why they picked up the stones to kill Him for blasphemy. Jehovah's Witness and Mormons insist that Jesus never claimed to be God. Oh yes, He did many, many times. This is one of them.

Jesus is supreme. Here is my question to you and myself: Is He supreme in our lives? So we claim to be followers of Christ. Does He get treated as the Master of your life each and every day by you or does He get left overs like a slave? No one can answer that, except you. And Father God in heaven knows everything about you.

C. GOD'S GRACE FOR GRACE

John 1:16-17 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.

Every human being receives 'common grace' from the Lord – like health, air to breathe, food to eat, knowledge, friendship, etc. But once you become a born-again believer of Jesus Christ, we get to have 'covenant grace' – salvation, the indwelling Holy Spirit in us, the peace that passes all understanding, faith in Him in the midst of

turmoils, eternal destination in heaven, etc. Everything we need to live the Christian life is given to us when we come to Him.

That is grace for grace. Grace on top of grace, on top of another grace from Him, on top of more grace. You get the picture. It is like the ocean – one wave comes and washes away any blemish on the sand, then another wave, more waves and more waves. Like that, you and I cannot wear out God's grace.

Romans 5:20b But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, Why does God do this? Because He loves you, He loves you so much that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus to die for your sins and mine. By doing so, we get to have eternal life in heaven, not by good works we do, or fame we might have. Only by His grace, my brothers and sisters.

Dr. Karl Barth, a theologian from yesteryear, was interviewed by a reporter who asked, "Dr. Barth, of all of the thoughts you have ever had, what is the deepest and most profound truth you've ever come across?" And the reporter waited for some deeper kind of wordy statement. But Dr. Karl Barth paused a moment and he said, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." So simple that a child can sing it; so profound and so deep enough that a theologian could drown in it. It's that deep.

In v17, John did not suggest that there was no grace under the Law of Moses, because there was. Each sacrifice was an expression of the grace of God. God could destroy the Israelites for their idol worship and sins, but He chose to accept their animal sacrifices as atonements for them. The Law also revealed God's truth. But in Jesus Christ, grace and truth reach their fullness; and this fullness is available to us.

We are saved by grace, but we also live by grace and depend on God's grace in all that we do. We can receive one grace after another, because He gives more grace.

D. GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN

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.

No one has seen God in His pure essence, in His full and undiminished glory. If there was anyone who came close to that, it would be Moses. Even Moses didn't get to see God face to face. He only saw the afterglow of God's glory.

Though God is invisible, Jesus Christ reveals God to us, because He is the image of the invisible God according to Colossians 1:

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

The word translated "declared" gives us our English word 'exegesis', which means "to explain, to unfold, to lead the way." Jesus Christ explains God to us and interprets Him for us. We simply cannot understand God apart from knowing His Son, Jesus Christ. Knowing Christ died – that's history; believing Christ died for me – that's salvation.

E. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

1) Introduction and summary – 1:1-18

In this first 18 verses, the apostle John summarizes Jesus' nature and ministry. The Lord Jesus was introduced by John the Baptizer, then rejected by His own people. But to all those who believed, "He gave the right to become children of God."

2) The beginning of Jesus' ministry – 1:19-4:54

Jesus stepped into the social and religious arena. He turned water to wine at the wedding in Cana (chapter 2) which proved that He was God who could overcome a nature with His supernatural capability. Then, the Lord met Nicodemus in chapter 3 and the Samaritan woman in Chapter 4. He healed the nobleman's son from the distance.

3) The growing opposition – 5-12

Jesus healed a man with infirmity for 38 years at the Pool of Bethesda on Sabbath in chapter 5. He fed 5,000 men and their families; walked on water in chapter 6; He healed a blind man in chapter 9. If all of these were not stunning enough, He raised dead Lazarus in chapter 11.

The apostle John showed the great contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus offered forgiveness to replace legalistic oppression. Foreshadowing His own resurrection, Jesus raised Lazarus. This was the last straw for the chief priest and the Pharisees who decided to kill Jesus. When Mary anointed Jesus' feet with the very costly perfume, she had unknowingly prepared Him for His burial in chapter 12. As it was prophesied, Jesus entered Jerusalem and accepted the praises from people in the same chapter.

4) Discourse with the Disciples – 13-17

Jesus no longer taught the public, rather started to prepare His disciples. Jesus taught His disciples about the Holy Spirit who would come to them after His departure in chapter 14; He urged them to live out what they have learned by abiding in Him in chapter 15. He also warned them that they would face persecution in chapter 15 and 16. But He reminded them His love and His intercessory prayer for them in chapter 17.

5) Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion – 18-19

Betrayed by His own, Jesus was arrested and went through 6 kangaroo courts before the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas, king Herod, and Pontius Pilate who eventually buckled under political pressure and ordered the Lord to be crucified.

On Golgotha, the sinless Son of God hung between heaven and earth to bring heaven to earth. The Father allowed all of humans' sins to pour upon His holy Son that we may become blameless through His atoning sacrifice.

6) Resurrection and reappearance – 20-21

The Lord resurrected and reappeared to Mary Magdalene and a couple of other women; His disciples later. He restored Peter who denied Him three times just as He told them. The Gospel ends with John's testimony that all he has written is true, and if everything that Jesus did and said was written down, *"I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."*

F. 7 of "I AM" Statements of Jesus

1) I am the Bread of life. – 6:35

2) I am the Light of the world. – 8:12

3) I am the Door. – 10:9

4) I am the Good Shepherd. – 10:11

5) I am the Resurrection and the Life. – 11:25

6) I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. – 14:6

7) I am the True Vine. – 15:1