

Lesson # 1 -- The Greatness of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus.

Introduction

- A. How do you measure "greatness" when that term is applied to a person? A part of the answer would have to do with moral character and the determination of that person to live according to righteousness.
- B. When we apply such a standard to the Lord Jesus -- the excellency of His character and life -- makes us look for another word. The word "greatness" suddenly becomes very inadequate.
- C. Sincere attempts to provide a Biblical presentation of the Lord Jesus have often been made. The following is one of the best.

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and also in human-ness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and body. He is of the same reality as God as far as His deity is concerned and of the same reality as we are ourselves as far as His human-ness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began He was begotten of the Father, in respect of His deity, and now in these "last days," for us and on behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the Virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of His human-ness.

We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten-in two natures; without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area of function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one hypostasis. They are not divided or cut into two prosopa, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Logos of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us; thus the Symbol of the Fathers has handed down to us.

(The Definition of Chalcedon, 451 A. D.)

I. The Greatness of the Lord Jesus is Indicated by Supernatural Recognition.

- A. The one sovereign plan of the Father is to exalt the Lord Jesus.

That in all things He might have the preeminence. Col. 1:18

- B. The affirmatioin of the Lord Jesus was that He ought to be exalted.

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Matt. 28:18

C. The goal of the Holy Spirit is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . He shall glorify me. John 16:13,14

D. The purpose in creating angels was to exalt the Lord Jesus.

And I heard the voice of many angels . . . Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Rev. 5:11,12

E. The design of all creation is to exalt the Lord Jesus.

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him. Col. 1:16

II. The Greatness of the Lord Jesus is Indicated by His Offices.

A. Jesus Christ is the divine prophet.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. John 14:6

1. The divine promise of the Old Testament regarding a coming prophet (Deut. 18:18,19) was fulfilled in the coming of the Savior (Acts 3:22).
2. In the Fall we lost our knowledge of God (Eph. 4:18,19). The Lord Jesus came as the revelation of God to us (Rev. 1:5).
3. Jesus Christ is our Prophet.

B. Jesus Christ is the divine priest.

Seeing then, that we have a great high priest ... Jesus the Son of God. Heb. 4:14

1. In the Lord Jesus we see all the Old Testament promises regarding the priesthood fulfilled (Heb. 5:6-10).
2. In the Fall we lost our relationship with God and brought upon ourselves guilt, condemnation, and death (Rom. 3:10,23; 6:23).
3. Jesus Christ is our priest. He came to die in our place (Rom. 5:8-10).

C. Jesus Christ is the divine king.

Jesus Christ ... the prince of the kings of the earth. Rev. 1:5

1. Jesus Christ is absolute in His sovereignty and Heir of all things (Heb. 1:2). As our King He will reign here upon earth in his future return (Is. 9:6,7; Luke 1:32).
2. In the Fall we lost control of both our life and person. We were taken into bondage by Satan (John 8:44). The Lord Jesus came to rescue us and bring us into a protective relationship with Himself (Eph. 1:13,14; Col. 1:13; Heb. 2:14,15).
3. Jesus Christ is our King. The believer looks forward to reigning with Him (Rev. 3:21; 20:4-6).

III. The Greatness of the Lord Jesus is Indicated by His Glorious Person.

A. He claimed personal equality with God the Father.

I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. John 10:30-33

Comment: The word "one" is neuter in the Greek which means the Savior said He was identical in nature with the Father. The Jews clearly understood the message -- He said He was God.

B. He claimed equality with God in His work.

Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. John 5:17,18

Comment: Because the Lord Jesus healed on the Sabbath -- He was accused of breaking the law of God. The Savior pointed out His work was done in the will of God and by the Father working through Him.

C. He claimed equality with God in accepting worship.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. John 20:27,28

Comment: It is clear that not only Thomas but all the disciples recognized the Lord Jesus to be God. In accepting such worship the Savior indicated his equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

D. He claimed equality with God as the object of faith.

Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. John 14:1

Comment: Faith is a decision to trust a person. When applied to God it is a confession of our belief in deity. The Lord Jesus invited the faith of the disciples because He was God.

E. He claimed equality with God at His trials.

Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy, what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. Mark 14:61-64

Comment: The Savior here accepted two titles of deity as stated by the high priest and added a third Himself. The response of the Sanhedrin was clear -- He had claimed to be God -- so He must die.

F. He claimed equality with God in His ministry.

1. He claimed to forgive sins.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee . . . Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? . . . But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way Mark 2:5,7,10,11

2. He claimed to be the Judge of the world.

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. John 5:22; 12:47,48

3. He claimed to be the only Savior of man.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life . . . I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am he (the "I Am"), ye shall die in your sins. John 5:24; 18:24

Conclusion. To reject the deity of Jesus Christ -- one must reject the clear message of the Bible. However, the Bible is truth -- and Jesus Christ is the Son of God -- our Savior and Lord.