

John 9

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A chapter so well known, and yet from which a constant enjoyment of the precious and inexhaustible glories of Christ contained therein is assured. The three references to the title of this blessed Person are the content of this short paper.

"A man called Jesus" - His compassions.

"A prophet" - The authority of His Word.

"The Son of God" - His unique personal glory.

The last verse of John 8 exposes the utter blindness of the flesh (religious though it may be) to the glory of Christ here in lowly Manhood. The Jews actually had the stones in their hands to destroy Him — who He was and the glory and power which were His were completely "hidden" from them. Unmoved by their enmity and "Satan's subtle wiles" He "passed on." How precious the following chapter commences "*And as He passed on*" — nothing stayed His movements of love! In His journey "He saw a man blind from birth." His condition — descriptive of the whole nation, and indeed of all by reason of fallen nature, was apparently completely uninteresting to the Pharisees and quite inexplicable to the disciples — but it moved the compassions of Jesus! His first recorded words — "My Father's business" — indicate the motives of His whole pathway, the will of the "Father of Compassions."

His compassion and His power are co-equal. In the three recorded incidents of His raising persons from the dead both shine out in their absolute perfection. In the house of Jairus (Mark 5) words of power as He dismissed death were couched in accents of precious tenderness — "Talitha Cumi," little child arise — and again His compassion is manifested in His words, "give her something to eat."

At Nain's gate His hand of power stayed the bier, His word of power raised the dead, and His compassions are seen in their beauty as He delivered the son to his doubly bereaved mother. His "loud voice" of authority broke the power of the grave and of corruption at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11), but His tears of sympathy had mingled with the sorrow of the bereaved sisters. Those tears were unique — the original word "wept" (v. 35) is never used of anyone else. No one ever felt as Christ has the havoc and sorrow that death brought into man's world. Precious — supremely precious — Saviour. "*He saw*" — the full need of all was known to Him — and "He had compassion." In Acts 8 the eunuch spoke to Philip of "some other man," and the same word is used of Christ in Acts 4 as the lame man made whole stands before all — "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none *other* Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The "Man called Jesus" stands alone in the power and glory unique to Himself! "Some other man" does not indicate just another person — in Christ an entirely new order of manhood is revealed. One who not only deals with all that is contrary to the holy character of God, but glorifies God in so doing; eventually filling the whole universe with that glory. God is love, eternally so, and that love is wonderfully expressed in the giving of His unique Son (John 3: 16) but before that love could really reach man's heart the suffering of the cross was involved, John 3:14 *must* be experienced. As John Baptist saw Jesus "coming to him" (John 1) the question of sin immediately arose — "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John does not say 'when' or 'how' this will be done, but calls attention (v. 30) to the pre-eminence of the One who does it. Thus, beloved, moral issues resolved, we are free to behold the "Lamb of God" — He who came in lowliness and compassionate love to die — but He who as the exalted Lamb of God fills the scene with

glory. "A Man called Jesus." How precious is that Name to countless thousands, soon to be owned and confessed as Lord of all!

The authority of His Word. In Deity He is the eternal Logos — the full expression of the thoughts and ways and affections of the Godhead. His word brought all creation into being and it is sustained by the power of that same word. In holy Manhood His word was still the expression of God's will and the revelation of His heart. His words and ways were replete with authority and compassion and as obeyed, brought blessing and joy to its recipient. A few incidents only may be alluded to. "Go . . . and wash" — authority and its consequent blessing were in view. The man born blind obeyed without argument or questioning and "came seeing." When challenged "what dost thou say of Him?," he answers with assurance "He is a prophet." He is not at the moment speaking of what He has done, but of Who He is, a confession ever costly to those who make it, but indescribably blessed! In Luke 7, testimony to Him as "a great prophet" was seen at Nain's gate — but in verse 39 Simon the Pharisee not only failed to recognise Him as such but spoke most derisively of Him "*this* (a term of complete disrespect) if He were a prophet would have known . . . the woman . . . is a sinner." but the "heart knowing God" was there; verse 47 reveals that He knew the depth of her iniquity as none else could. His compassions were moved and His knowledge of *all* her trespass was made manifest. "Go in peace" — a word involving an entirely new position, carrying with it assurance and rest of heart that results from obedience to God's word. *A prophet!* In John 8 His word of authority reached the consciences of the adulterous woman's accusers and He was left alone with her. Her sin, was notorious and their reference to the penalty correct, but Jesus "stooped down." Beloved brethren, that stoop was essential if the atmosphere of "no condemnation" was to appear. After stooping He looked at her and again the word of authority is uttered "Go and sin no more." May we without speculation suggest that the following verse indicates the path in which she could enjoy the compassion of the One who had spoken such words of authority and command to her? "He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." A path of *peace* in Luke 7 — a pathway of *light* in John 8. No other voice but the authoritative word of Christ Himself could give us the assurance and right to walk in such pathways.

Briefly, we refer to John 11. We have noticed His compassions at the grave of Lazarus — now we see His authority too. "Loose him and let him go", words which follow His "loud voice, Lazarus come forth." Death and its consequent corruption are defeated and "the dead came forth." He was to be loosed and let *go* — but where to? The following chapter surely gives the answer — "Lazarus was one of those at table with Him" (v.2). Precious result of His mighty act of power — communion with Himself.

Cleansing, peace, light, communion with Himself in a sphere redolent with responsive affection to Christ, these are the features of enjoyment which follow upon obedience to the powerful word of One whose "love is as great as His power, and knows neither measure nor end."

The erstwhile blind man makes still further progress in his knowledge of the Saviour — the glory of Christ as Son of God fills his heart. What glories his new found sight beholds! How wondrous the revelation which followed his question, "Who is He Lord?" The desire which prompted the question was surely precious to Christ. It was no idle wish, but expressive of deepening interest in the One who had so blessed him — "that I might believe." John never uses the noun "faith" in his gospel, but his many references to the *verb* "believe" indicates that which continues. Supremely blessed occupation, the contemplation of the glorious "Son of God." The Father Himself opens the heavens to declare His own pleasure and delight in Him here; He has been seen and heard of men (v.37); manifested in lowly grace as of David's seed; He has been declared Son of God in power . . . by resurrection of the dead. In His essential deity as *Son* He is known only to the Father (Matthew 11), but in the same Gospel Matt.

16 Peter confesses, "*Thou* art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Whilst we await His Son from the heavens (1 Thessalonians 1: 10), the Holy Spirit of God continues His ministry of "perfecting the saints" and "edifying the body of Christ until we all arrive at the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians 4).

Moral darkness masks the world in increasing measure, formal religion is blinded as to the glory of Christ (vv. 40, 41) but in the infinite mercy of God our eyes have been opened, and as turned "from darkness to light" are found "among them that are sanctified in (Christ)" (Acts 26). Precious words from the exalted and glorified Son of God who from the highest place in heaven yet speaks of Himself to Saul of Tarsus — "I am Jesus."

The subject is inexhaustible, surrounding as it does One who is eternal in his glory; and whilst found here in subject Manhood, will fill the day of God with the praises of those who through grace can say "we see Jesus" and falling at His blessed feet "worship Him."