

# The Glories of the Lord Jesus

Extracts from notes of an address on John 1.

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Let us look at some of the glories of the Lord Jesus as revealed in this chapter. In verse 1 He is spoken of as "the Word" in verse 7 as "the Light;" in verse 18 as "the only-begotten Son;" in verse 29 as "the Lamb of God;" in verse 34 as "the Son of God;" in verse 41 as "the Christ;" in verse 49 as "the King of Israel;" in verse 51 as "the Son of Man." Thus the Spirit of God brings before us the greatness of the One who is our Saviour in His love and glory, and the effect of this is that we love to honour Him — to worship and serve Him.

## The Word

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Suppose you could get right back behind everything, and find the point where everything that had a beginning began, there the Word was. And in verse 3 it says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." So that when things did have a beginning, they had their beginning from Him. But then He had no beginning, because in the beginning He was there to create.

Then we may well ask, When He is spoken of as "the Word," what does that mean? Well, in the simplest way, if you were to look at my face, or watch me walking in the street, or observe me in my home, you would still not be able to find out what was in my mind or in the secret working of my heart. But when I speak and give you my word, a good deal of what is in my heart and mind is brought to light. Now in some such simple way we understand the first verse of John 1. The One, who is now our Saviour, was in the beginning of creation, is now, and at all times, competent to bring out and express every thought that was in the mind of God. All the deep thoughts of God, all His wisdom, all His knowledge and all His purpose, perfectly set out in this Person called the Word.

If we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find it stated there that God has both spoken to us and created all things by His Son. But here the same Person is spoken of as the Word. And since it was the Word who created, every little thing that He made carried with it some expression of the glory of God. We look at the grandest part of the creation — the heavens, — and observe its order and beauty. Well, as the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare the glory of God." And so it is with the earth apart

from the mischief that sin has wrought. Everything created expresses in some way the glory of God, because it was made by One who is Himself the expression of all that God is — "the Word."

Because we belong to a different order of things, being a new creation in Christ, it does not do for us to overlook the wisdom and glory of God seen in all His works. The One who is our Saviour was competent, being Himself God, to put some expression of the glory of God into everything He made; and becoming Man, as verse 14 says, He has brought the glory of God into full display.

## **The Light**

Then notice that in verse 7, John the Baptist is only a man sent to bear witness of the Light, whereas Christ was the Light, for in Him was the Life that was the Light of men. If we consider the creation that surrounds us today, we might wonder how it could in any way set forth the glory of God. We think of the centuries of sorrow and of death, of misery, of pain and suffering and wickedness. This is not like God nor according to His will. The sin of man has spoiled everything.

Well now, this glorious Person who is the everlasting Word came down here and shone as the Light, representing perfectly what God is, and living wholly for the pleasure of God in the midst of the surrounding sin and darkness. In every point the eye of God must have rested upon Him with infinite delight. But while the Life shone as the Light, making God known in all His purity, it brought into display the awful background of man's sin. The coming of the Light has been the great test, and has shown up the blackness and evil of mankind. He was in the world and the world did not know Him. Its ignorance and blindness were revealed.

Also He came to His own things and His own people did not receive Him, though there were some that did receive Him and thereby became children of God, and were born of God. So the Light has shone and such as these saw it, while for the rest it only brought to light their awful condition as fallen sinners. Our condition has been exposed. When tested, we are shown to be just "Adam," sinning against God, hiding from God, delighting to get rid of God, even when showing Himself in grace.

## **The Only Begotten Son**

Now the Word became flesh, and so the 18th verse brings to us a third view of His glory. The Father has been declared by the only begotten Son, who is ever in His bosom, knowing all the thoughts of His heart. So the coming of the Lord Jesus not only exposed down to the bottom all that man is but also brought to us full knowledge of what God is. In His becoming Man there was God's approach to man in truth, showing them the grace that is in His heart.

In the early days of pioneering work on the Congo, there was a Dr. Grenfell, who had a small steamer built on the upper river, on which he went exploring. One day they got into a large tributary river quite new to them, and they found the hitherto undiscovered natives very hostile. They could not make out what this thing was that came panting up the river, breathing out fire and smoke. From the bank they could see it was being fed with logs, and they thought it was some kind of monster come up to do them harm. Whenever there was any attempt of the missionaries to land so as to get provisions, they were armed and showed fight. The position got serious, for at every place it was just the same.

Then Dr. Grenfell thought of a plan. His wife and child were on board but had been kept in the cabin because of the danger. He spoke to her and got her consent to come up and show herself and the infant child to the natives. This simple plan was effective. Though the natives did not understand the

new monster before their eyes, they did understand that men do not go out to fight with women and babies. They interpreted it at once as a message of peace, a message to do them good. The men were allowed to land and they got on all right after that.

In the coming of the everlasting Word into the world, as recorded in Luke 2, when He was seen as a Babe in His mother's arms, we can see God approaching men in such a way as to take away their fears. The angels spoke to the shepherds not of fear but of "great joy." And as we read through the Gospels we see Him in incident after incident so acting as to remove all fear. He "went about doing good." Thus it was up to the cross when God forsook Him as the Sin-bearer. There we see the immeasurable awfulness of sin and the immeasurable love and holiness of God. But how can these two things — man's need, and God's love and glory — be reconciled?

## **The Lamb of God**

We look at the 29th verse to see the One that "taketh away the sin of the world." Nothing has been slurred over. Sin in all its terrible darkness has been judged. The glory of God — His holiness, His righteousness, the sovereignty of His throne, the truth of His judgment — all has been taken account of and displayed, as well as the love and grace of His heart. We see the solution of this great question of good and evil in the cross and death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus. This Gospel which starts by presenting Him as the Lamb, ends with the record of the shedding of His blood by the thrust of the soldier's spear. How precious must that blood be to God!

I read some time ago an affecting story of a friend visiting a very wealthy man in the United States shortly after the war between the north and the south, who took him to a fine view-point and bidding him look in every direction said, "All this is mine." An immense estate it was. Then taking him into his house he went to a cupboard and took out a small piece of a pot, saying, "I value this piece of pot more than all my estate." The friend wondered and waited for an explanation, which was given. In the civil war his son had been killed and a friend by his side, when he was shot down, picked up this piece of a pot on which his blood had fallen, and gave it to his father. The poor father said, "I value this piece, on which is a drop of my son's blood, more than all the property you see today."

I think you can understand this feeling of a father's heart. But think of God, and the Lamb of God who shed His blood. No wonder it is called, "the precious blood of Christ." We can rejoice that our need is met — our sins are pardoned, our sinful nature condemned — but at the same time the glory of God has been maintained, His holiness and love brought into full display.

## **The Son of God**

Before John spoke of Jesus for the second time as the Lamb of God, he had seen Him, and he bore witness to Him, as the Son of God, as we find in verse 34. John knew that He was to be made manifest to Israel, but he did not know Him in the full sense of the word until at His baptism the Spirit descended and remained on Him. Then he realized His greatness and could testify that He would Himself baptize with the Holy Spirit. This He did when He had ascended up into glory.

Speaking of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus, John could say, "I saw it," with my natural eyes. Can we say, not with natural eyes but by faith, that we have seen the Son of God in His glory, from whom the Spirit has been shed forth upon us who believe the Gospel. We rejoice when a sinner's eyes are opened to see in Jesus their Saviour, but we rejoice further when our eyes are open to see the greatness of the Son of God, from whom the Spirit is given, to see Him superseding all others in His

supremacy and majesty and glory. The day when the Lord Jesus Christ simply outshines all others and everything else, is a grand day in the history of the soul. Then, as in the case of the two disciples in verse 37, we follow Jesus. The two disciples were set free from the trammels of their old religion to follow Him. So may we be.

## **The Messiah**

One of these two disciples who followed Him was Andrew, and he sought out his own brother Simon, as we see in verse 41. His testimony was, "We have found the Messiah — the Christ." This means that they recognized Him as "the Anointed One," as He had been prophetically announced in Psalm 2: 2, and again in Isaiah 61: 1. All the way through the Old Testament there occurs this promise of the Messiah who was to come as the Centre of all God's good purpose for the earth — the One in whom Israel should be blessed and the nations of the world healed. This was as far as they knew at that moment, and although we have obtained an inheritance as connected with a heavenly Christ, we can rejoice in it too. What the sun is to this planet in a material way, the Lord Jesus will be to the whole earth in a spiritual way in the millennial age which is to come.

## **The King of Israel**

The blessed Lord Jesus has been constituted God's Centre, and as the risen Man He will hold every part of the creation in its right relation to God. We have our part as associated with Him in a heavenly portion, but that does not mean that He has abandoned His promises to Israel. Hence what we have in verse 49, from the lips of Nathaniel. He who is our Saviour is so great that He can hold all God's system of blessing together. He will claim all the land of Israel for His people. At present people may be going into it from national or political motives, but that is not in accordance with the mind of God.

Whatever men may do the Lord Jesus will bring Israel into the land according to God. All Israel will be saved and blessed there, and through them blessing will go out to the nations. He shall sit upon the throne of His father David, and establish all that God has promised

## **The Son of Man**

We come now to the last verse of the chapter, and are introduced to the great moment when God will put everything into the hands of the Son of Man, as predicted in Psalm 8. He will rule and exercise His beneficent sway over the whole of the creation. Angels will be His servants and do His bidding in every direction. All will be subject to Him.

We began with the Word in a past eternity. We end with everything in the hands of the Son of Man in a future eternity. He is "The First." He is also "The Last." He is our Saviour. May God give us to value Him more, to honour Him, to delight in Him, and count it a privilege to serve Him, while we wait for Him.