

Christ's Pre-incarnate Glory

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[0 : 00] Let me begin by letting you know that I think, Pastor Saul, we have about 100 Gospel of John's that I want to encourage you along with our study in the book of John that you carefully and prayerfully consider adding to your pocket wear.

Pardon? They're at the visitor center. Now what we're going to do when we were working our way through the book of Ephesians, one of the blessings that we enjoyed was that periodically we relied on different ones of you to recite one of the chapters in the book of Ephesians.

And we are not going to do the same thing with John necessarily. There are going to be different times perhaps where we may have some recitations from the book of John.

But one of the things that I want to encourage you to do is I want you to prayerfully consider taking one of these Gospels and putting it in your pocket and carrying it with you and praying about the Lord giving you an opportunity to share the Gospel and encourage someone.

Hey, by the way, why don't you read this book? And periodically, every couple months or so, we are going to have various ones of you that have been praying and looking for the opportunities as God gives that opportunity for you to share that and say, hey, here's how God answered that prayer.

[1 : 41] Okay? I don't want you to go out there and grab nine or ten Gospels at one shot unless you are anticipating using all ten of them here in short order. But you prayerfully consider if I take one, then I am making a commitment that I am going to pray and ask God to give me opportunity.

And I will be one of those that God uses as He answers prayer and gives people opportunity to use you to kind of touch them with the Gospel. Okay? Let's keep that in mind as we work our way through the Gospel of John and you continue being in prayer.

Lord, give me the opportunity. Use me to draw attention to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's take a moment and pray. Our Father God, this morning as we come with a glad dependence upon your sufficiency and your word, we're mindful that the word that we have and will handle this morning is that which you have declared from all eternity, true, settled, unchanging, sufficient, all that we need for life and godliness.

And we are thankful that not only have you given to us the word, but you have also given to us the indwelling spirit spirit. And those of us that are here this morning may rely upon the ministry of the Spirit of God to give us hearts to hear and apply and enjoy and delight in the sweetness of the truth that is found in these verses.

And that as it says in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, we beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being changed from glory to glory. And we're reminded that that is the work of the Spirit of God.

[3 : 43] And so this morning we, without hesitation, call upon you to work in us as a fellowship and in me as a preacher of the gospel to make the word clear and to allow it to impact our lives for the glory of Christ.

And we ask this in Jesus' name and because of His glory. Amen. I want you to take your Bible. If you haven't already turned to the book of John, there was a, it was interesting to listen to Tom in Sunday school give us a great overview of salvation.

And I have to tell you that Tom did a great, a great ministry of laying out the broad scope of what comes when a person comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in that flow, Tom alluded to the fact that we're probably going to be in the book of John for, I think he used the word forever. That is not true at all.

Okay. And then John Kroll, I can't believe you did that. He made a very similar, did you guys kind of collude together and say, all right, we're going to ding pastor with this.

[4 : 50] Hey, listen, I want to tell you something in the evening sermon. I am going to take Deuteronomy and I'm going to cover in a broad flow from chapter one to 31. And it can be done.

You're going to see it happen. So show up and see how it actually happens. There's going to be a broad overview. In fact, listening to you guys, I'm thinking one of these days I'm going to preach all 66 books of the Bible in one sermon.

And you guys will walk out of there and say, if he could do that once, why doesn't he do it twice? Now, listen, there is a beauty and there's a satisfaction in the word, isn't there?

And every time we open it up, we see the glory and the significance and the supremacy of Christ. And if that is true in any place, it is particularly true in the book we're in right now.

And I want you to listen, follow along as I read to you verses one through five to kind of just set in your mind the glory of the introduction of John to us.

[5 : 56] In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

I remind you that John explained to us when we began our study in this book that his objective is to give us a clear picture of who the Lord Jesus Christ is.

In John chapter 20 verse 30 and 31 he talked about the fact that there was an awful lot that could have been written but the things that he chose to write about all focused in on giving us information to bring us to faith to bring us to life.

And as we begin the book of John the thing that John the apostle wants us to understand very clearly about Christ is that he indeed is God.

[7 : 14] He is God the son the second person in the trinity and he in his entire capacity as God the son is supremely important and supremely equipped to be the one who makes God known to us.

As we look at this second lesson I want you to pick up with me there in verse 2 when John says this he was in the beginning with God.

We can understand from that that he is making a statement about the fact that Jesus Christ is face to face with God. His opening statement that we looked at last week reminded us that for one the word was eternal from the beginning the word was secondly with God or face to face with him as I've referenced already and he is equal to God in communion and person and he is entirely equal in all aspects.

Furthermore as we see at the last part of chapter 1 verse 1 it says that Jesus Christ is God he is divine. So in one sense what we find in chapter 1 verse 2 is a repetition of what's already been said. Now why do we repeat things? Why do you repeat things as parents? Or why do you repeat things when you sense that there's a need to do so?

[8 : 53] It's not just to hear yourself talk it is to hammer the point home and make it clear.

Sometimes I remember I think about some of the experiences of raising children and there were some things that you thought were fairly important and you would emphasize it again and again.

And so here is John at the very beginning at the outset he says listen if there's anything I want you to understand I want you to grab the reality of who the Lord Jesus Christ is and the Holy Spirit instructs John and John writes this verse and blesses us with a repeated reminder of who our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ really is.

I want you to understand that Jesus deserves more than a glance or a hurried nod. He came to be the Lamb of God. He came to be our Savior. He came to die for our sins.

And at the very outset as we begin to think about who Jesus is and what he has done for us it's appropriate for us to recognize the magnificence of his person. You know to kind of stop and think about so he died.

That really doesn't have any resonance or any significance unless you stop and realize who he is and why he did it. And so as John starts out here and presents his gospel to us he wants us to get this idea firmly fixed in our mind that the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior is God and eternal and with the Father face to face and entirely equal to the Father.

[10 : 30] And I want to tell you something if you are not gripped this morning by the reality of who Christ is it is an indication of one of several things to consider carefully. For one you may be sitting here and the truth of the matter is the Holy Spirit has never touched your life drawn you to the cross and you are by nature at this point dead in trespasses and sin.

And who the Lord Jesus Christ is to you is maybe a word that you've heard used or you've used it yourself but he's not significant to you. It may be that you're here and you know Christ as your Savior but the reality of it is as it says in the book of Revelation your love has grown cold. You've lost your first love. He's no longer significant to you and I want to remind you that that love is to be rekindled by an understanding of who he is and what he does. And so as you look at this verse you're reminded he was in the beginning with God.

The one that you have a relationship with is not just some kind of person who came along and is moderately significant for the moment. He is God the Son eternal and significant.

There's one other little piece that I want us to recognize here. Verse 2 doesn't silence the heretic. Many of us here at one point or another have either had a Jehovah's Witness or perhaps maybe a Mormon or somebody else show up at our door and talk to us about Jesus and they've been willing to say well he's a pretty important person but he's not God.

[12:01] You cannot get through the two verses in John without coming to grips with the fact that the Bible if we are to rely upon it to speak accurately and honestly the Bible makes it clear that Jesus is God.

He's not some kind of special person alone. He's God. So I want you to understand that at the very outset at the beginning the scripture wants you to understand that the one we are dealing with and all that John is going to write about is God the Son who came to be our Savior.

There's another fact that we want to pick up there in verse 3 and let me read it to you. It says all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. Let's stop just for a moment and do a little bit of a mental exercise.

So why is it there? That's a fair question. And when you are doing your own reading of the scripture when you're studying at home by yourself one of the things that will help you is asking yourself the question over and over again as you're reading as you're studying.

So why is that there? What's it saying? What's its value? Why did the Holy Spirit choose to put that information there? Well I want you to understand that the statement that we are looking at here in verse 3 is that Jesus is the creator.

[13:24] John moves from that statement about the glory and transcendent beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ being God the Son. He kind of comes down into a more practical relationship with us as created beings.

And he announces in essence that we owe our existence to him. Everything was made by Jesus. Look at that statement again. All things were made through him.

It's interesting if you kind of skip down the page just a little bit to come to verse 10. He was in the world and the world was made through him. How is it that we enjoy the creation that we exist in and that is all around us?

It is not because it came about kind of some you know. Yeah evolution. Thank you. It wasn't a matter of chance. It was a matter of creation.

I love the fact. I'm trying to think of the name of the missionary who can help me. The last missionary we had is going to be a missionary in Toronto, Canada. Who can give me the name of them?

[14:28] Kruger. Kruger. Ben Kruger. He shared when he was here with us he shared the fact that he has had this ministry with Chinese up there in Toronto and one of the Chinese students that they had been ministering to said that they came to realize that if they could look at an artist picture they had to realize that there was an artist who did that.

And they had to recognize the reality that somebody else made that. And this Chinese student came to Christ by recognizing that when they looked out at the creation they had to admit somebody else brought that into being.

It just didn't happen. The Bible is undeniably clear about the fact that Christ is the creator. I want you to look at a couple other passages kind of solidify this in your thinking.

Turn if you will to Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1 and we're going to look at verse 15 through 17. Very interesting to find how often this issue of Christ being the creator comes forward and is presented for our attention and our thought.

Colossians chapter 1 verse 15. He is the image of the invisible God the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together.

[16:10] Let me draw attention to yet another text that I want you to mark and it might be one of those that I you might find benefit in underlining in your Bible. Turn if you will the first Corinthians chapter 8 verse 6.

You have people who come to you and say well Jesus is a very very important person but he's not God. If A equals B and B equals A are they the same essentially?

Okay let's look at 8 1 Corinthians 8 verse 6. Yet for us there is one God the Father.

Stop. That's monotheism isn't it? Agreed? One God the Father. And it goes on. From whom are all things and for whom we exist.

Stop right there for a second. Good declaration that sounds very much like what we have in Genesis chapter 1 verse 1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

[17:16] Now let's go forward with the remainder of what the apostle has to tell us in verse 6. And one Jesus the Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

What's it saying? How is it that I exist? I exist because of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the creator of the universe. Furthermore as you go back to John we see it stated first of all positively that he is the creator of all that exists.

But in order to emphasize it John turns around what he has already said positively and he says it in a negative way not negative in terms of he is not the creator but he reverses the logic a little bit to force us to think deeper about the reality of Christ and his significance in creation.

Let me read it to you back there in John chapter 1. And without him was not anything made that was made. Whoa. He made it all. In fact there is nothing that exists that he didn't make.

The apostle wants us to understand very clearly the reality of the fact that the entire creation that we enjoy that we marvel at that we are in wonder when we consider all of that came into being because God the son created it and made it exactly the way he made it.

[18:50] The diversity of the universe the the diversity of each of us individually we are the express creative power of the Lord Jesus Christ who made us for his pleasure and for his glory.

I want you to stop and recognize another little piece in that verse. It says that he made all that was made out of nothing. He made all that was made out of nothing.

The other day we're in the process of doing a little bit of cooking in our home and if you're going to cook guess what you have to have. You have to have the stuff to cook with is that right.

And so if you're going to make macaroni and cheese guess what. You can't start with hamburgers and rice. You have to have macaroni you have to have cheese and and for us what does it mean. If we don't have it in the pantry what do we have to do. We have to make a list we have to go to the store we have to buy it we bring it home we do something with it. But when we make something in essence what we are doing is relying upon various pieces that are already in place and putting it together.

[20:02] And we can make something a little different. It's not just dry old macaroni noodles and it's not just old plain old cheese it's mixed together and a little bit of spices and it comes out pretty good.

That's not what happened with Christ. I want you to recognize that when God created the universe when Christ created all that we see he made it out of nothing.

He made it out of nothing. I want you to stop just for a moment and ask yourself that question as I did earlier. So why is this here. What's the significant of the fact that Christ is the creator of the universe.

Well because he is our creator he owns us and he has the right to determine our purpose. Do you follow that. As I was thinking about a way to illustrate that I thought of maybe taking a balloon and blowing it up fairly large and then letting it go.

And you know what would have done around here and so landed in one of your laps and you think well okay pastor blew it up he can let it go and go where it wants to. And so another thing I could have done is I've blown that balloon up and then taken my pen out and popped it because I blew it up.

[21:14] It was my right to do with it as I chose. I want you to understand that God is the one who made you and he made you for his glory and Christ intends for you who he created to be a value and bring glory to him.

I want you to turn back if you will just for a moment to a passage in Psalm 8. Go back to Psalm 8 and listen to what the psalmist has to say in relationship to the issue of creation.

Psalm 8 verse 3 and 4 it says when I look at your heavens the work of your fingers the moon and the stars which you have set in place what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him.

You know sometimes we get overwhelmed with our own significance and it's an entirely deceitful thought. What I mean by that is we kind of obsess about who we are. We get all bent out of shape about what other people think about us.

We're kind of all wiggled out about how it's working out for us and the truth of the matter is that in the scope of the glory of God and the person of Christ we are really pretty relatively insignificant and the psalmist says what in the world are we that he actually cares for me personally and for you personally.

[22 : 35] The majesty of that equation lies in his significance and the absolute stunning reality that we who are nothing we're just a breath we're just a moment.

He thinks about us and cares about us and has chosen to become our Lord and our Savior. Have you look at another passage if you will over in Psalm 19.

Psalm 19. The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. When you look at what you see around you and you really take some time to look at it fairly carefully you have to admit it's pretty stunning isn't it.

I remember looking at my neighbor's oak tree and there it kind of stands and it has these massive limbs that are stretched out into just all over the yard and I think to myself that is amazing how that's all done.

The root system underneath supports this gargantuan tree and the weight that is there and it all is held together because he designed it that way.

[23 : 47] You look at the stars and we sang this morning about the creating God that we worship and enjoy and we remind ourselves he's the one who did all that.

I want you to recognize that the one who is the creator is the one who designed creation to point attention to God. Turn over in your Bible if you will we are there in Psalm 19 but I want you to go if you would to Romans chapter 1.

Romans chapter 1. I want you to listen if you would to what we find there in verse 20 it says for his invisible attributes namely his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

You know what it's saying? It's saying that that which has been created is an undeniable signpost pointing to the reality of Christ as the creator and because he is the creator we are without excuse to listen to the other things that he has to say and that's the argument that the apostle makes in Romans where Paul says let me tell you something he who created us is someone to be listened to and attended to.

And so I want you to recognize this morning as you look at this passage going back to John chapter 1 verse 3 it says all things were made by him. He's our creator and because he is our creator he has a right to tell us what to do and how to live and he has a right to the outcome and glory from our life.

[25 : 45] I want you to look now if you will also at verse 3 and 4 or 4 and 5. In him was life and the life was the light of men. That little statement in him was life is kind of a very interesting declaration of the reality that is in Christ Jesus and in particular was in Christ Jesus at the beginning of recorded history.

In the garden when mankind enjoyed communion with the father with the son we have to understand that that that was a blessed state to be in.

And as you look at the Lord Jesus Christ being light and life I want you to understand that through his creation he granted to us an existence that allowed us to have communion with him.

And we are given understanding particular that this business of life and light is not just physical existence but also a spiritual relationship and a spiritual communion with him.

And in the garden you'll remember that as the day unfolded and man and woman had been involved in whatever they were involved in in that in that Edenic state in the evening what did they do?

[27 : 03] They enjoyed fellowship with the father with the Lord Jesus and in the cool of the evening he would walk with them and be in communion. It says and in with him was life and light.

I want you to turn if you would again back to Psalm 36 verse 9. Psalm 36 verse 9 as we think about the relationship we have with God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 36 verse 9. For with you for with you is the fountain of life in your life we do see light.

For with you is the fountain of life in your light we do see light. So what is it that we enjoy apart from Christ? Not life.

We enjoy hardship and difficulty. We enjoy no lasting purpose. We suffer under the the delusion of our brief state and we are deceived to think that we are far more significant than we really are.

[28 : 14] And the fact of the matter is that apart from the Lord Jesus we live in darkness and suffer. In John chapter 1 verse 4 it says the light is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The life is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I want you to recognize also one other little piece of information that we find here and we mark it in particular there in verse 5 it says the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

What's this world like? How many of you find yourself on occasion as you listen to the news getting a little depressed? A little discouraged? Whether it is what is going on in Iraq or what is going on in Israel or what it is going on or whatever is going on in Washington.

Whatever it is that's going on in your community around you. The lives of people that you know.

Some of the messes that you're involved in and aware of. You look at these things and say man this is a dark dismal world.

John says this. The light shines in darkness. And the light will not be overcome by the darkness.

[29 : 24] You know we live in a very dark world. This is a dark world. It's filled with the blackness of sin and that is a terrible reality. When you stop and realize it you look around and you recognize this world is a poor poor place because of what sin has brought in to the lives of people.

I want you to recognize that not only is the world a dark place but people choose that darkness and they prefer it. Darkness as we are looking at here in the scripture is not just talking about the absence of the lights being on but it's really talking about the spiritual condition of man's heart.

And one of the sad sad realities is that the world is in a dark position but the world also chooses to stay there. I want you to turn your Bible if you would to John chapter 3.

We're there just a chapter or two away. But look at John chapter 3 verse 19 and 20. And this is the judgment. Let me go over that again slowly and just listen as you hear it.

This is the judgment. The light has come into the world and people have loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his work should be exposed.

[30 : 59] Let me give you an illustration. I love the fact that every politician in the early going promises that they are going to do a better job than the previous administration. And when election time comes around we're going to hear another set of promises.

Isn't that right? This will be the most illuminating administration that we have ever had in the history of mankind. And what happens after individuals get into place?

Not just on one side of the aisle but on every side of the aisle darkness descends. Do you know why it descends? Because of the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. And here in John the apostle says let me tell you something.

Then the characteristic of the heart of the unregenerate man is that he prefers the darkness because he doesn't want to have his sin exposed. Romans chapter 1 verse 21.

Not only do men choose the darkness but there is a consequence that comes with choosing the darkness. And it says this for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[32 : 13] Now that's a pretty frightening thought. I want you to think with me about it. It's saying that when men choose darkness it gets darker.

Think about that. When you refuse the light you're given things get worse. And going back to John chapter 1 it says this.

The light shines in the darkness. The light shines in the midst of that. Men who want to suppress the truth.

Men who want to deny the goodness and glory of God. Who want to turn their back on all that is part of God's blessing and his character for us.

It says this. Men choose the darkness because that's the way they want to be. Does that mean that the world is shut out then from the light? No. That's not what it says.

[33 : 15] Because what it says there in the latter part and the darkness has not overcome it. I want you to recognize this morning that the reality of it is this. Is that despite the world that we live in.

The light of the Lord Jesus Christ and the sweetness of his gospel. Is something that will outshine the darkness of the world that we live in. And it will not be suppressed.

Wherever it is that darkness exists. We can count upon Christ to bring light through the gospel and the truth of his salvation.

And I want you to understand that we who have received the light. Who have had our sins forgiven through the blood of Christ. Live to make the light known to those who are in the condition that we once were.

Do you recognize that? One of the things that you and I carry with us is we remember what it was to be in the darkened room. Of our own sinfulness and the blackness of our heart. And we have received the light.

[34 : 18] The blessing. The forgiveness of Christ. And we know the sweet privilege it is to be delivered from the burden of our sin. And it is our privilege. To lift up the light and say listen.

I want you to know that there is hope for you. In the darkness of the moment of your life. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He came to pay the penalty for sin.

And the scriptures make it clear. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be what? Shall be saved. So as you look this morning at this passage.

I want you to understand. Here's the sweet truth. God in his mercy sent his son the Lord Jesus Christ. He who was the creator of the universe. And that is the absolute baffling reality.

That God himself was willing to step into our brutal and ugly mess. For the sake of redemption and for us. He invaded our darkness.

[35 : 22] And he came here to invade the darkness. To rescue sinners from the pit. And that's me. And that's you. And I want to encourage you to recognize. That if you are sitting here this morning.

And you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. There is hope in the corner of darkness that you are. And that hope is in coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is the light. And the truth.

And the life. And you may have deliverance from the darkness of your sin. Through one simple fact. Through the fact of coming to grips.

I am a sinner who stand justly condemned before a holy God. I would deserve eternity in hell. Because of the darkness of my heart. But God sent his son the Lord Jesus Christ to die in my place. And the scripture says. Whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Shall not perish. But have everlasting life. And let me encourage you to understand this morning.

[36 : 23] That we who know the light. Guess what our business is. It is to be pointing our finger towards the one who is the light. And letting other people know. He is the one who can bring light into the darkness of their life.

And those who sit here today who do not know Christ. Today is the day. Let me make it clear to you. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And you're one of them.

Let's close our eyes as we pray. Our precious Father in God. This morning we rejoice in the beauty of the scripture.

And the reminder that the Lord Jesus Christ. The creator of the universe. The one through whom and by whom all things exist. And by whom all things are sustained.

Is also the one who came into the world. To bring light into darkness. And to bring salvation. Where there was brokenness and sin. And Father my prayer would be this.

[37 : 20] That if there are those who are sitting here today. Who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. That today by the power of the spirit of God. They would be drawn to recognize. That the despair of their soul.

The burden. The shame. The guilt. May be relieved. By confessing their sin. And believing on what Jesus Christ.

Has done to save them. Thank you for the sweetness of the gospel. That reminds us. That our salvation is not a matter of our own works. But the work of Christ. Who came to die and rise again. And to be our savior. To all who trust in him. And that's our prayer this morning. We ask in your precious name. Amen.