

One Who is Above All

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[0 : 0 0] and to the singers and to Jane for leading us in our worship. Turn with me please to the Gospel of John chapter 4. John chapter 4. Time is really gone. This will be the fastest sermon you have heard this morning. I'm going to go through this at breakneck speed. Yes, and we'll have communion as well. So hold on to the edge of your seats, and there's at least seven points in this, but they're just going to come boom, boom, boom, boom, and if you miss them, that's your fault.

So we'll give this a go, shall we? Let's just come before God. Come before God's Word first of all, and then we'll pray, and then we'll look at this passage together. John chapter 3. We're going to read John chapter 3, verse 22. We finished at verse 21. Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, and we're considering Jesus. That's why we're studying the Gospel of John. We're looking at Jesus. We're not looking at ourself. We're looking primarily at Him. He is worthy of our attention.

So let's read from 22. After this, Jesus and His disciples went into the Judean countryside, where He spent some time within and baptized. Now, John also was baptizing at Aeon near Salem, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. This was before John was put in prison. An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, the one you testified about, look, he is baptizing and everyone is going to him.

To this John replied, A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, I am not the Messiah, but I'm sent ahead of him. The bride belongs to the bridegroom.

The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater. I must become less.

[2 : 1 4] The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.

For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives his spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

Serious words and important words. Let's come before God. Let's ask for his help. Our loving Father, with your word open before us, we thank you for all that's gone up to this point, where we have said much and sang much. Lord, you have heard our voice. But as we come to your word now, we pray that we would hear your voice speaking to us from the pages of Scripture. So, Father, teach us, we pray. Help us to understand more of your Son, that we might not only understand him, but that we might worship him and serve him. So, Father, be with us, we pray. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Here's a program that I've not really watched. I think I've only ever seen one of these, Who Do You Think You Are? It goes through somebody's genealogy, who they are, and you discover whether you're a nobody or whether you're nobility. And I think the only one I saw was Josh Whittacombe.

I was very impressed by his. I mean, he was nobility, his family tree. Mine wouldn't be so impressive. This morning, we are considering once again the book of the gospel of John and the life of Jesus in particular. You remember John writes his gospel. He says, I have written these things that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in him, you will have life in his name. This is such an important gospel. All the gospels are important.

But John tells us, I'm presenting my material so that you will know who Jesus is. And we're only in chapter 3. We've come to the end of chapter 3, and we have discovered much about Jesus, his origin, and so forth. And we've considered others who met him, and they were blown away by him.

He is Christ.

[4 : 51] He is the Messiah. He's the Son of God. And John presents a couple of signs. We've looked at various things. Last week, we looked at Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. How to see heaven, how to enter heaven, how to remain in heaven. You must be born again by the Spirit of God. You need to be recreated, regenerate, and you need to believe as a result of that. The Holy Spirit even grants us faith by believing we have eternal life. Now, we're coming to another part in John's gospel here, and Jesus is now getting a name for himself. He's been well known, and people, he's going around preaching, teaching, doing miracles, and so forth. And in this account, you see jealousy arising.

From John the Baptist's disciples, and Jesus and his disciples. There was a hug fest at one time, but now Jesus is off doing his thing. They're still baptizing, baptism of repentance, and Jesus is now baptizing. And we see here that Jesus appears to be duplicating the work of John the Baptist. He is baptizing. There's a conversation arises with a Jewish man about ceremonial washings, and an argument develops, as we see in verse 25, between John's disciples and this person. As a result of this, the jealousy within John's disciples shows itself. Verse 26, they came to John, John the Baptist, and said to him, Rabbi, that man—other versions are a bit more gracious, the one who was with you, or whatever—but that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, the one you testified, look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him. And we see a bit of jealousy here. In chapter 4, it's backed up in verse 1, the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John. And John the Baptist's response is to teach these disciples, this is who Jesus is.

You can't compare me with him and what he is doing. So, that's what we're going to look at very quickly this morning. So, first of all, then, I've given this the title, One Who is Above All Others. That's what John the Baptist—he says a lot about Jesus here. That's why I'm going to go through these points very quickly, and you can just tick them off. He tells us, or he tells them, he reminds them who Jesus is, that he is not the same. They're not on a level playing field.

[7 : 36] John, Jesus is far bigger. So, John the Baptist's disciples are anxious about that man who was doing this. And John the Baptist presents seven things here very quickly about who Jesus is.

First of all, source. They all begin with S, so that makes it easy for you. Source. By this, I mean origin. He tells them who Jesus is. He might have been born in Bethlehem, brought up in Nazareth, but he existed before these places. We saw this right at the very beginning, the very first words of John, in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning. He is superior in every way to John the Baptist. And in verse 31, John basically tells us that he is from above. The one who comes from above is above all. The one who's from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.

He cannot be compared to anyone else. He is above all. I was born in Springburn in Glasgow. That's nothing to boast about.

Jesus, can anything good come from Nazareth? But Jesus' origins were before that. He is far, far superior. In John 6, 46, we read these, No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God. Only he has seen the Father. It's not just his origins, but he saw the Father. He is one with the Father. By contrast, John is from the earth. John is from this world.

[9 : 15] But verse 31, The one who is from heaven is above all. Therefore, John the Baptist says, We need to listen to him. He is above all. Secondly, he is sent. He is the sent one. He reminds him in verse 28, I am not the Messiah. I was sent from God. But he is the sent one. He is the one who is sent directly from God.

He has come from heaven. And therefore, you need to listen to him. John 5, 37. Jesus will mention this many times throughout the gospel.

I was sent by the Father. He didn't just come. The Father sent him. And this is a common teaching that you will hear from Jesus. John 5, 37, And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. This is my beloved Son, whom I will please listen to him. So, he was sent. He reminds them that he was sent. I am not the Messiah.

He is the Messiah. Thirdly, I've used the word spouse. I like this. It's talking more than just about being a prophet. He comes as a lover. He comes as the bridegroom to a bride. And that's the terminology he uses. Look at verse 29. The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's

voice.

That joy is mine, and it is now complete. John the Baptist calls himself the friend of the bridegroom. There's a picture here of love, of somebody coming, not as a policeman, not as a judge, but he comes as the bridegroom for his people, the bride. You see this picture in the Old Testament, Jeremiah 2, go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, and I remember the devotion of your youth. How as a bride you loved me. It's a picture in the Old Testament, looks forward to a picture in the New, when the married supper, the wedding feast takes place. This is very much the picture of Jesus coming as the bridegroom. In Mark's gospel, Jesus actually says, how can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? He says, I'm the bridegroom. I've come for my bride. It's very, very important. And John the Baptist, he's just the friend of the bridegroom.

[11 : 49] I love doing weddings. The most important person or people are the bride and the bridegroom. Everybody else is there to support them, to celebrate them. It's not about the chief bridesmaid.

It's not about the best man. They don't say, look at me, everybody. They wait. Even the words that's used here, I wait, I listen. He's there. Now that the bridegroom's come, he rejoices in this.

It's a great thing when you see, I love seeing that the bride, the best man squirming before, they're nervous, they're nervous, and they're looking up there all the time. And then when they come, and then they look up and they see the bride coming down, and they're just filled with joy.

The joy that's on their face, there is my bride coming. The Lord is filled with joy for his bride. But John the Baptist is filled with joy because the bridegroom has arrived. So he's telling us that Jesus comes as a lover, a lover for his people. He's not a policeman. He comes because he loves his people. Fourthly, he sees and speaks. Jesus sees and speaks. He tells us that Jesus is above all because of what he has seen and because of what he speaks. Jesus came from heaven. He speaks about the things of heaven. He came from heaven, and he speaks the words of God. We see this in verse 32 and 34. He, Jesus, testifies to what he has seen and heard. Verse 34, for the one whom God has sent speaks the word of God. That's why Jesus will say many times, truly, truly, I tell you, listen to what I'm saying. The Father has sent me. It's not like Islam, where Muhammad, I studied

Islamic Bible College, where he received the word of God piecemeal from the heavenly table. It was given to him. That's how the Quran came about. He had a vision, and God, from the heavenly table, takes the Lord, gives it to Muhammad. He writes it all up. It's the Quran. Jesus came from heaven. He saw the Father. He dwelt with the Father. He is one with the Father. He is God the Son, and he comes, and he speaks with authority. Very different. No other person, who do you think you are? There's usually big, well-known names that they put through that program. Who can compare to Jesus? He's above all because he's from above. It makes all the difference. Jesus himself will say in John 12, for I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. So, whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. Directly from the Father, he comes. So, we need to listen to his teaching. Fifthly, he's spirit-filled. Verse 34, for the one whom God has sent speaks the word of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. That's in contrast to Old Testament prophets who had the Spirit for a certain job. Go here. They're filled with the Spirit. They do the particular task. It's given for a specific role, specific task. Jesus, on the other hand, is given the Spirit without limit. And you and I can quench the Spirit. Maybe you're sitting here this morning, and the Spirit is quenched. It's a dreadful thing when we can be angry or not right with God, and it alienates us in that sense from God and knowing his love. Jesus was filled with the Spirit.

[15 : 25] Sixthly, he is the Son of God. Verse 35, the Father loves the Son. I was amazed in the study of just how much John the Baptist says about Jesus in this passage. You should be ticking them off, going, wow, I've just bought myself a new washing machine, and I can't even believe the amount of things on it.

Every time I put some, is there something for towels? Oh, yeah, boy, there's one for towels. Is there something for bedding? Yeah, there's one for bedding. Usually, just turn it on, cottons, boom, and it come out the way it come out. And you go, I'm just loving my washing machine, because I'm going, look at all the features, and it can do this, and it can, I love pouring over manuals.

The more it can do, the better. Well, Jesus is not a manual, but we should be looking at these things and looking at this list and going, wow, this is the one that we follow. This is our Savior.

We should be excited. He is the Son of God. Jesus' relationship to the Father is not just one of commission, go and preach. It's one of relationship. It is Father's Son. He is the Son of God. It's very different from any other Old Testament prophet who was of the earth, who spoke the words of God from that perspective. Jesus, as baptism and the transfiguration, this is my Son whom I love. With Him, I am well pleased. Listen to Him. It makes all the difference. Seventhly and lastly, under this first point, He is supreme. Supreme in authority. The Father loves the Son, and has placed everything, verse 35, into His hands. He has authority to do miracles, to walk in water, to raise the dead. He is supreme in every single way.

[17:10] Chapter 10, verse 18, I have authority to lay down my life and authority to take it again. This command I receive from the Father. We will consider that as we go around the Lord's table. He laid His life down.

It wasn't taken from Him. He lay it down, and He could take it back if He wanted. He had authority. All power and all authority has been given to Him. While He was on earth, after He died, rose from the earth, seated at the Father's right hand, He says Himself, all power, all authority is given to Me. This is the Savior that we serve. Because of these seven things, John says He is one who is above all, the one who is above everyone, because He is from above, and these things here. Does that make sense?

Let's look at the second one very quickly. How should we relate to Jesus then? If this is the case, two things very quickly, non-Christian, Christian. If you're not a believer here, if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, you're still seeking, you're still wondering, you don't know if you're right before God. If I said to you, how do you know you would get into heaven? How could you answer that? How do you know biblically that you're right before God?

If you're not a Christian, first of all, we say you need to take note. Take note of Jesus. Begin there. Verse 34, for the one whom God has sent speaks the word of God. Verse 32, He testifies to what He's seen and heard. In other words, how we are to relate to Jesus, take note of Him, if you're not a Christian this morning. Take note of Him. Listen to Him. I read the Gospel of John before I became a Christian. Didn't understand it, but I was aware I wasn't reading about David Beckham or somebody else.

[18:58] I was reading about somebody. Nobody is like this man. Nobody can be compared to him, but the seven things before and so much more. I became a Christian before I got to the end of it, and it took me a year and a half on and off, but a year and a half from seeking God, and God opened my heart to see His Son. And take note of Him. Study. If you don't get it, you're not going to discover Jesus watching East Enders or something else. You will discover Jesus by reading God's Word.

Read Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Read any of this, but I commend John to you. John paints a very high picture of Jesus, and you, as you read God's Word, what the Lord can maybe spoke, but you need to listen to Him. Jesus, when He came, or John the Baptist says here, verse 32, He testifies to what He has seen and heard, but no one accepts His testimony. This is the problem. People hear about Jesus. They know about Jesus. Everybody in West the Hill knows about Jesus, but they prefer darkness.

We looked at this last week, rather than light. They like Halloween. They don't really like celebrating. They like celebrating Christmas for gifts, but they won't pack the churches out giving thanks for the birth of Jesus, but they'll decorate their house with demons and ghouls and stuff like that. They prefer darkness rather than light. Light has come into the world, but people love darkness instead of light. We need to listen to His teaching. Secondly, trust. I've used this word rather than belief. Trust means dependence. Devils believe in Jesus. It's not enough to believe in Jesus.

We need to trust in Jesus. Trust. I think I always like the illustration about the guy, you've probably heard it, the tightrope walker, going across the Grand Canyon or some big gap, whatever it was, I can't remember, and he's going to cross, and everybody's applauding. You can do it. You are the man. Yep, you can do this. And then somebody basically says, right, here's a wheelbarrow.

Who will get in the wheelbarrow? So, they believed they could do it, but they weren't prepared to trust them with them in the wheelbarrow. And that is the same with Jesus. You can believe in Jesus, and you can like Him, and this, that, and that. You can be impressed by Him. But are you trusting in Him alone for salvation? Are you prepared to get in the wheelbarrow and put your whole life in His hands where He saves you? Last week, we read a few verses earlier, probably the most, we drove by a car yesterday, and in the back of this car was John 3.16. I was so pleased. John

3.16, just a text, and you know the verse, for God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son. Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. Now, John finishes with solemn words in verse 36 of the same chapter, where he basically tells us that whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Mention that in verse 16, but whoever rejects the Son, who doesn't trust in the Son, shall not see life, but God's wrath remains on him. Our natural condition is the wrath of God. If people are in Western Hills, members of your family who do not trust the Lord, they don't need to wonder how it will fare with them in heaven.

[22 : 27] This verse tells us the wrath of God is already on them. And to get this removed, we need to trust in Jesus. That is how we are saved. Lord, forgive me. I deserve wrath. I deserve to be punished. I deserve to be excluded from your presence. But you love me. You sent your Son to die. And I thank you that he died on the cross to take away my sin. I'm trusting in that sacrifice. That's what we mean by trust.

Lastly, for the Christian, serve humbly. Serve humbly. It speaks to us as well. We are. It's not all about you. And it's not all about Westerhales Baptist Church. It is all about Christ. He must increase and we must decrease. It's the only way to serve. As long as you're wanting to be served, you cannot serve him.

Jesus gave an example of washing their feet. Do you understand what I've done? You need to serve. That it's the only way. John the Baptist, it's probably the best verse in the passage we read this morning. He must become greater. I must become less. We need to attend. We need to wait. We need to listen. It's really all about him. But that's not always the case, is it? I don't mind being called a servant. Paul called himself a servant. But don't treat me like a servant. We want to be recognized.

I often say to young preachers, and I remind myself when you're in the pulpit, you cannot preach that Christ is great and you are great at the same time. You have to become less. He has to become greater.

Whatever glorifies Christ. So how do you cope if another Christian is being praised all the time and Ian and the musicians are getting high fives, thanks guys, you're the best, and somebody's overlooked. And you go, wow, I've been serving tea and coffee. I wouldn't mind getting a bit of praise.

[24 : 27] And Jesus is glorified because of their work. But we wanted a wee bit as well, and we're in the huff. So we're miffed that Jesus is glorified through them because we're not glorified as well.

It's the same with churches. We don't mind a new church opening up, and it's great, and they're a mile up the road, and they're doing well, and they're doing a good job. Suddenly, their numbers got from 50 to 100 to 200, and then the green-eyed monster comes. But they're John the Baptist's disciples.

Who do they think they are? They're growing in this, that, and the other. Jesus is being glorified. He's increasing there. But we're not increasing, and we go in the huff. We don't like it.

It happens very easily. Jesus must increase however he chooses to do this, through somebody else or whatever. But we need to decrease inner service for him. It means to take up the cross and to follow him. John the Baptist served, lastly served, not only humbly but joyfully.

Picture of the best man. It really is so, so good. He's coming, and the wedding's there, the bridegroom's arrived, and he's, wow, he is so, so happy. He serves with joy. John the Baptist's disciples, you remember, wanted to be first. Let us be first. Can we sit at your right hand and left hand? And the rest of the disciples were really miffed. They were angry with him. Who do you guys think you are? And these are the things that will rob us of our joy. John the Baptist loved serving.

[26 : 05] It wasn't out of compulsion. The other ones are complaining. What about this? And that guy, and he's doing this, and they're baptizing more than us. And John the Baptist says, my joy is complete.

Jesus is being glorified, and in this I will rejoice. You can let go of the side of your seats now. That's us finished. Let's just run through the last two slides, Phil. That's who Jesus is, from above, sent. He comes as a lover for his people. He speaks from above, speaks to things he has seen. He is spirit-filled. He is the Son of God. He is given all authority. If you're a Christian here, or a non-Christian, then you need to listen to Jesus, and you need to trust in Jesus. And if you're a Christian here, you need to serve humbly, but serve joyfully, not reluctantly. Let's stand and sing the servant king. From heaven you came, helpless babe. How many verses are in this? Four.

Yeah, we'll give it a bash. Yeah. Do two. Let's do two verses. From heaven you came, helpless babe. Into the world, it will glory be. Not to be served, but to serve. And give a life that we might live. This is our God, the servant king. He calls us now to follow him. To bring our lives and the day of mourning. Of worship to the servant king.

This, realiz duda and the sin in the death. A work that we may die. Now, if we breathe, and we ask to heal, the telecommunity. Our healthy stamp will be! Thearing love to be served, and our lit nature is still, and we dwell in» And ourasia and her organisation will be!

[28 : 33] Love to bow. the servant king he calls us now to follow him to bring our lives as a daily uproar oh worship the servant king and I'll just close this part in prayer our loving father we praise and thank you for this glimpse Lord in many ways of your son Lord he's worthy of all praise and glory and honour he is above all because he is from above because he is the son of God Lord as we continue to consider him around the Lord's table bless our thoughts together in Jesus name Amen. Amen. Thank you folks in a moment or two just before because I always forget this bit just before we take the bread we will sing Jesus is Lord the cry that echoes through creation but I want to this is Remembrance Sunday once a year in our land there is a Remembrance Sunday where we remember rightfully those who gave their life that we might be free

I always love that expression remember tell them that for your tomorrows we gave our today that really is very emotional you have a tomorrow they have no tomorrow they gave their today always sends a shiver down my spine and it's very easy we have we have Remembrance Sunday not once a year every month when we remember the Lord's death in his own appointed way we remember this cup that reminds us of his shed blood this reminds us of his broken body but Jesus' death is not the same it's not just the same death elevated higher in many ways it's a different death I often wonder how soldiers I've never really spoke to anybody who's been in the war and come out what goes through their mind I'm sure nobody signs up saying I'm going I'm going to die they go they fight for their country they hope that they will come back that they'll dodge the bullet there won't be a bullet with their name on it that's what they hope nobody says

I'm just going to die I just want to go into this Jesus' death was different Jesus walked towards death he knew that he was going to die he didn't come to this earth hoping that somehow he would escape he knew if there's any other way let it be done but there's no other way he had to die for the sins of the world but he laid down his life voluntarily the other thing is soldiers in Britain or France or America whatever were fighting for the innocent fighting the enemy to save the innocent Jesus comes to save the enemy that is very different while we were still enemies Christ died for us I don't know anybody that was willing to lay down their life for the Nazis it just doesn't make sense unless you're a Nazi or whatever but Jesus came not to save the innocent but to save the guilty he came to save you and I and as we gather around the Lord's table this morning we are reminded that we are unworthy of such love as we praise the armed forces for what they do we praise the Lord his death is not the same and not only that it wasn't just for one nation is for all the nations of the world we don't own him in that sense he is the saviour of the world so let's think about these things on remembering Sunday as we remember the Lord's death always let's at this point give thanks for the bread in fact nobody won't we're going to sing because I said

I always forget this bit let's remain seated Jesus is Lord the cry that echoes through creation remaining seated we'll just sing the first two verses and then we'll give thanks for the bread Jesus is Lord the cry that echoes through creation the Lord resplendent power eternal murder are all the Son of God the King whose glory fills the heavens yet peace has come to taste his living bread Jesus is Lord whose words sustains the stars and tannies yet in his wisdom they decide his cry Jesus the man who washed our feet who bore our suffering he came to bring salvation to give thanks for the bread that reminds us of our saviour's broken body thank you John Lord we gather together to remember your death your body that's broken for each one of us and Lord we're conscious that we share this symbolic meal together with people who meet perhaps in fear of the authorities around the world in North Korea or Saudi Arabia and yet we are all part of the same body of Christ and gather to break bread and to worship you and remember your death and Lord we just thank you for your great gift you gave to us of eternal life through your death your sacrifice atorn for our sin amen thank you John you'll gather this is for 15 if you are not a Christian you are just like the wine passed by but I only speak to somebody afterwards about the faith as I was saying you need to get to know Jesus as your own saviour if you're a Christian but you're not walking with the Lord likewise this is where we keep short accounts with God just confess that sin don't let the

devil keep you in the slough of the spawn come back to him confess your sin take this bread remind yourself that his sacrifice is enough for all your sins we read these words in Luke [35 : 43] Jesus took bread gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them saying this is my body given for you this do he says in remembrance of me we will eat the bread as we receive it well and more I've seen I bamboo also I never have a followed on I Thank you.