

The Word of Life Messenger

“Holding forth the word of life” Phil. 2:16

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THE PREEMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST

“...That in all things that he might have the preeminence” Col. 1:18

One of the most common heresies down through the years has been the denial of the deity of Christ. This passage of Scripture provides the most emphatic statement of the full deity of Christ, of his unique work on our behalf, and of His exalted place in the plans and purposes of the Father. Truly, there has never been another person like the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to examine His pre-incarnate glory, His manifested glory, and His ascended glory, and his coming glory - a glory in which the Father has declared that in all things He (Jesus) is to have the preeminence.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ died for me so I am Christ purchased; as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ I have Christ living in me so I am Christ possessed; as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ He can work through me so that I am Christ permeated to the extent that Christ is preeminent in my life. Again, in all of His people He is present. The Scripture says “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). In some of His people He is prominent. Those who observe them or who know them recognize them to be Christians by their worship, witness, and their walk. In a few people, Christ is preeminent. Like the apostle Paul they can truthfully say “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” This is the will of the Father that in all things Christ might be preeminent.

Christ is Preeminent in His Pre-incarnate glory. He is described in Colossians 1:15 as being the “first-born of all creation”. This does not mean that Jesus is a created being, but that He has preeminence over all the creation. The work *first-born* means that He has priority. In Psalms 89:27 the Father declares “I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. John says “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God” (1:1-2). Jesus told the Pharisees “before Abraham was, I am.” (8:58). He has always existed as a member of the triune Godhead. Isaiah saw Him enthroned in heaven receiving the worship of heavenly beings long before He was ever born in Bethlehem’s manger (Isaiah. 6:1-3; John 12:41).

Through the ages Jesus Christ has been preeminent in God’s dealings with men. First, Christ is preeminent in the Word of God. Jesus told the Pharisees to “search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). Jesus when He was speaking to the Emmaus disciples spoke of the necessity of His death and resurrection. Luke says “Beginning at Moses and the Prophets (the Old Testament Scriptures), he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures

the things pertaining to himself” (Luke 24:27). Today, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament one can look in any book of the Bible, and if he looks close enough, and long enough he will find pictures of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the preeminent focus of the Scripture.

Second, Christ is preeminent in the purpose and plans of God. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the seed of the woman, the lamb which God would provide to Abraham, the seed through which all nations would be blessed, the desire of all nations, the coming Branch of the Lord, the root of David, the Kinsman-Redeemer, the fulfiller of all the types and sacrifices of the Old Testament, the fulfiller of all the promises of God, the coming King who will rule over all nations, the promised Messiah, the child born, the Son given. He was the one the Father sent in the fullness of time, made of a woman, made under the law that he might redeem us from the curse of the law (Gal. 4:5). He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God to be crucified and slain for our redemption (Acts 2:23). The father raised him up, received Him back into heaven and seated Him at His own right hand. And one day at the Father’s word, He will return again in glory to reign over this world,

(Continued on Page 2)

THE PREEMINENT GLORY OF CHRIST

(Continued from Page 1)

and every knee will bow and confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father. He is preeminent in the purpose and plans of the Father.

Third, Christ is preeminent in the love of the Father. "For the Father loveth the Son" (John 15:9). Three times the Father spoke from heaven and put his stamp of approval upon His Son. At his baptism, He proclaimed "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (John 3:17). On the Mount of Transfiguration the Scripture says the Father spoke again and said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well

pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). As our Savior prepared to go to the cross the Father again spoke concerning his name saying, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." (John 12:28) Then our savior cried "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32) as He spoke concerning his coming death. In our text in Colossians 1 the Scripture says "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Colossians 2:9 tells us that in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. Colossians 1:13 says He is his "dear Son," literally the Son of His love. He then is a member of the trinity who was daily delight of the Father even before the foundation of the world. He is the beloved

Son, the one God sent to be our redeemer. He is now and always preeminent in the love of the Father.

Fourth, He is preeminent in the work of the Holy Spirit. It was Jesus who said "I will send Him unto you... and when He is come He will glorify me." (John 16:7,14) The Holy Spirit points men to Christ and draws them effectively to Him. This takes a great burden off the preacher or the witness to Christ. He is to present Christ as clearly as he can knowing that the Holy Spirit is the one who will glorify Christ out of his simple, faltering message. Christ is preeminent in the work of the Holy Spirit.

-Larry Windham

WHAT WE HAVE IN CHRIST

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us..." (1 John 3:1)

How often do you stop to think what great things God has done for you and to give him thanks in prayer, worship, bible study, meditation and praise? In 1 John 3:1-4, the apostle John speaks of four things we can be thankful for as God's children. First, he says we can be thankful for a settled past. He tells us to marvel at the love that God has already bestowed upon us in Christ Jesus. It is an undeserving love; we were sinners and deserved God's wrath and judgment. It is an unreserved love; it resulted in a full forgiveness of our sin and provided the basis on which we could be called the children of God. God sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might clothe the believing sinner in Christ's righteousness and make us one of His children with all the rights as joint heirs with Christ. He loves us just like He loves His Son. Moreover, because Christ paid the penalty for our sin, no one can ever again bring a charge against us that will stand. Our position is safe and secure in Christ. We have a settled past the moment we trust Christ

for our salvation.

Second, we have a satisfied present. John says "Now are we the children of God" (3:2). We don't have to wait until we get to heaven's gate to find out if we are saved, we can enjoy the certainty of salvation right now. We can know that nothing will ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8). We can know that we are kept by the power of God until that day (Phil. 1:6; 1 Peter 1:5). Right now our desire can be to know Him more intimately, to walk with Him more closely, to serve Him more fervently, and to worship and praise Him more knowledgeably. We can enjoy Him now because we have a satisfied present.

Third, we have a secure future. John again writes "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is" (3:2). There is coming a day when we are going to be confirmed in righteousness, our sanctification will be complete and perfect, and there will be no more sin, sickness, sorrow, separation or

death in our lives. There is coming a day when we will have new bodies fitted for eternity and not subject to the limitations we have here, or subject to the maladies we experience here. Though we see through a glass dimly now; we have only a partial understanding of what our new bodies and lives will be like, we know like the Psalmist David when he wrote "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness" (17:15) and "in thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures ever more" (16:11). Yes, we as God's children have a secure future.

Finally, we have a stimulating hope. What God has done for us moves us to want to serve Him, follow Him, and know Him more intimately. This is all of God's grace too that He would cause us to walk in good works and desire to worship Him. John says "and every man that hath this hope in him purified himself, even as he is pure" (3:3). By God's grace we are being changed day by day to be more like Christ. Truly this is a stimulating hope!

-Larry Windham

FULLNESS OF JOY IN GOD'S PRESENCE

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11). God’s people can rejoice in the joy of the Lord. We need to be aware of God’s presence in our lives as saved people and enjoy the fullness of joy.

The joy of God’s salvation is manifested in the path of life. According to the Psalmist, God shows or reveals to us this path. The word “path” means a beaten track. It is a plain, revealed path because our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, has gone before in preparing the way. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). “Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path” (Psalm 27:11). The path of life is illuminated by the word of God. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). It is the path of the just, the ones who have been justified by faith through the shed blood of Christ when He died for our sins on the cross and was buried and raised from the grave. “But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). Our Lord shows us the path and leads His dear children. “He

restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake” (Psalm 23:3). All the Lord’s paths are mercy and truth. (See Psalm 25:10).

Second, we can enjoy the fullness of joy because God is present. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). Notice this verse teaches that we must be gathered in His name. “Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms” (Psalm 95:2). “Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing” (Psalm 100:2).

Third, there are pleasures forever in God’s presence. “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures” (Psalm 36:8). The Lord is speaking of spiritual pleasures, not the pleasures of the flesh. Many of God’s people forsake the Lord’s church on Sunday to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh. This is not pleasing to the Lord. It pleased the Lord to bruise His Son that we might be saved and enjoy the fullness of His joy forever. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he

hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand” (Isaiah 53:10).

The latter part of Psalm 16:11 reminds us: “at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” As I read this verse, I remember that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ came into the world to pay our sin penalty. In order for Him to do this, He had to die for our sins and be buried and raised again. When He was raised, He ascended back to Heaven and sat down on the right hand of God. “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). No wonder that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

-Gladwin Carpenter

REJOICE IN THE LORD

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). The keynote of Philippians is joy. Paul testifies to his own joy. He says that joy punctuates his prayers on their behalf. He declares his intention to rejoice whenever Christ is preached, even if such preaching is prompted by unworthy motives. The Philippians themselves are his “joy and crown.” Their gift to him has called forth joy on his part, and he exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord at all times.

Some of the Philippians likely knew of a time when Paul had

demonstrated joy during a most trying ordeal. Years before, he and Silas had filled a Philippian jail with their songs of praise at the midnight hour. “Rejoice in the Lord always” was more than a pious phrase with Paul, and his friends knew it.

Rejoicing in the Lord will help us to bear what otherwise might be intolerable burdens. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” Such joy is a sure cure for discord and strife among us. If Euodias and Syntyche (4:2) will spend their time exalting the Lord, they simply will have no

time to run down each other! A constant expression of joy is certain to exercise a powerful witness for Christ.

To “rejoice in the Lord always” requires an act of the will. Let us vow with Habakkuk the prophet, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” Habakkuk 3:17, 18).

-Jack Maroon

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Notice

The North Central and Northeast MS Baptist Bible Conferences will meet with Friendship Baptist Church, County Road 39, Houston, MS on Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2005.

The North Central Conference begins at 9:55 a.m. and concludes at 3:15 p.m. with lunch served at 12:00 noon. Studies for the day will be Matthew chapters 11-13 with 8 preachers on program.

The Northeast Conference begins with supper at 5:30

6:25 p.m. - Song

6:30 p.m. - Jeremy Williams

Alt. - Billy Little

6:55 p.m. - Chris Duncan

Alt. - Bobby Adams

7:25 p.m. - Larry Windham

Alt. - John Gray

Each preacher will choose the Scripture of his choice.

Bro. Gladwin Carpenter and Friendship Baptist Church invite you to this time of Bible study.

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JESUS CAME TO SAVE

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (I Tim. 1:15). “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16, 17).

Have you come to believe that Jesus came to save through His death, burial and resurrection?

- Gladwin Carpenter

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