

THE PERSON OF CHRIST (1)

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Hebrews 1.

This is the first sermon in a series entitled quite simply 'The Person and Work of Christ'. There is no subject more wonderful or more glorious than this. It is an important and an inspiring subject. We may feel more comfortable looking at the work of Christ, especially the cross, rather than the Person of Christ. But if He is not the Person that we are going to describe Him as, then, unless He is that Person, He has not done the work that we believe He has done. Our salvation is vitally important and it is important we pay as much attention as possible to what the Lord has done to obtain it for us.

It is of course true that what we are going to be studying here was not known by us in this detail when we were converted. The Lord saw to it that we knew enough when we were converted to put our trust in the Lord and be saved. But we surely should not rest content with what we knew then but look to grow in knowledge.

It is important to understand these matters, not only if we are preachers but also if we are seeking to make Him known in our personal witness. We do not want people to know just enough to be saved but to be able to offer them a richer and fuller Christ. People we might talk to will not be able to receive all the things that we will be learning in this series. But if we have these things somewhere in our thinking, it will enable us to proclaim the Lord more clearly, sincerely and truly.

It must surely be true that the Lord is pleased if we seek to learn more about His Son. This is His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. It does not reflect well on us, as Christians, if we are not interested in finding out more about the One the Father loves and would have us to honour. We are also called to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. We will be able to do this better if we know and understand Him better. Likewise, when we pray in His name, we will be able to do this more meaningfully and spiritually, the better we know Him.

The better versed we are in these things, the better we will be preserved from error. There are many errors taught about the Lord Jesus Christ, among whom we could mention orthodox Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, and liberal Christians. These all deny central truths about the Lord Jesus and remove from us His power to save us. We have to be discerning so as to recognize these errors, and other more subtle ones, and hold to the truth about the Lord.

1. He is God.

This is the only heading in this first study. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. This is very clearly taught in Hebrews 1:1-4. This short passage is full of proofs of the divinity of Christ. By calling Him 'His Son', this is, in and of itself, a declaration of His divinity. He is the heir of all things and God would not say this of any mere mortal. He could only say it of Himself. He is called the Creator and no-one, except God, has the power to create. In saying He is the brightness of God's glory; it is once again ascribing deity to Him. God's glory is the sum of all His perfections, such as His perfect justice, holiness, love, and power. The Lord Jesus is the visible expression of those attributes so that we can see them worked out before us. In being the express image of His person, it is saying He is an exact and faithful copy of His Father. There is no difference between them.

In saying that the Lord Jesus is God, the eternally begotten of the Father, we are not saying that His deity is of a lesser kind. We are not putting forward the idea that His deity is derived from the Father and came after the Father. His deity is eternal otherwise it is not deity at all. He is not different to the Father in any regard but has all the perfections of His Father. Like the Father, He is the same everywhere, at all times and in all situations.

His titles are titles of deity. That is what He was understood to be saying when He called Himself the Son of God, as we shall see in a moment. The title 'Son of Man' is also a title of deity as can be seen in Daniel 9. Thomas was right when he saw the risen Christ and declared 'My Lord and my God' (John 20:28). He was not corrected for saying it. Neither were the wise men rebuked for worshipping the baby Jesus or the disciples for worshipping the Lord when they brought Him into the boat after He had been walking on the water.

Time and time again He does what only God can do, such as forgive sin (Mark 2:5-7). He gives life (John 5:21) and He judges (John 5:22), which are acts that only God can do. He is to be honored by clear instruction of the Father and the Father would not have us honour anyone unless He is God.

His claim to be the Son of God was a claim to deity, as was understood by those who wrongly accused him of blasphemy (John 5:16-18). And we know the passages where the Lord told people that if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father (See John 12:45 and John 14:7-9).

The truth that the Lord Jesus is God is a vital truth taught everywhere in the New Testament and also anticipated in the Old Testament. It is important that we believe it and defend it as truth.