

Jesus Declares His Deity

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We're going to hit a short pause button on our study of the Psalms for this week and next and maybe one more, it depends on how far we get this evening. We're ready to pick up in Psalm 42. We finished the first book of the Psalms and this was a good little hinge point to do something just a little bit different here this evening and next week, and there are multiple reasons why I want to do this. We have announced that this fall we're going to have a series of studies in systematic theology on Saturday mornings; the first Saturday of every month beginning in October, 9 o'clock, probably going until about 11, each first Saturday of the month, October through April. So there's about seven sessions there and we'll have a lot more to say about that in the days to come, but I just wanted to kind of give a little bit of a teaser maybe, if you could call this that, I wanted to kind of give you a foretaste of the kinds of things that we'll be considering as we have that study and I also wanted to get this particular material out and be available for that study in advance.

We're going to look at for two or three weeks, we're going to consider the biblical testimony to the deity of Christ. This is a central and foundational doctrine to the Gospel and to Christianity that Jesus Christ is God himself. He has the exact same essence as God the Father, and it is because of that that Jesus Christ is able to save us from our sins. He is fully God and he is fully man. As we've said perhaps in the past, if you think about a bridge and how a bridge is going to take you across a river, the person of Christ is like a bridge that leads us across the river, the gulf of our sin that separates us from God. A bridge must make contact on one side and also on the other side simultaneously if it is going to deliver you safe as you go across the water. But that is the way it is with Christ, he is fully identified with us in his humanity and he is fully identified with God in his deity and because of that, he is able to reconcile sinful man to a holy God because both natures reside in his single person and so the deity of Christ is essential. It is because he is infinite God that he is able to bear the infinite guilt of our sin and your sin.

So we have to know who this Savior is that we believe in and if you'll turn to the Gospel of John, all of our study is going to center on texts from the Gospel of John. I like to approach it this way. You could approach the deity of Christ from many many different directions, we're going to approach it from the Gospel of John, and what I would like to say to you is that we have covered this topic ever so briefly in our broader message titled "What is the Trinity," which we preached a couple of years ago when we were laying the doctrinal foundation of our church. There are several copies of this CD out on the table in the lobby if you would like to pick one of those up. It would be a wonderful supplement

for this study that we're going to do tonight. We're going to dive into the deity of Christ in a deeper way than we were able to do back then.

The Gospel of John, a wonderful book to send people to evangelistically and I'm going to go on a tangent right now. Your goal evangelistically is to get people to read the Bible. I mean, I understand that evangelistically you want to see people saved but what you want to do is to draw them into the text of Scripture because it is the word of God that has the power to convert a soul. It doesn't do any good to give them philosophical arguments about the existence of God, they need to see the word of God with their own eyes and read it with their own eyes and apprehend it with their own mind with their own eyes because that is where the converting power of God lies. So there is a reason why we often send people to the Gospel of John evangelistically, we want people to read the Gospel of John because John says at the end of his Gospel, "These things were written so that you would believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing, you might have life in His name." So the whole Gospel of John has an evangelistic purpose. It is about bringing people into contact with the real Christ.

Now, with that little bit of framework done, what can we say about the Gospel of John and the deity of Christ? It's incredible, possibly you've never seen this before. The Gospel of John begins and ends with the deity of Christ. It begins and ends with a declaration that Jesus Christ is God himself in human flesh. John 1:1, look at it with me. I love this book that we call the Bible, don't you? John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Plain and direct, the Word who is Jesus Christ was and is God and he existed before time began. In the beginning, the Word already was God, is what he's saying.

Then with that little note, we'll come back to this passage, I want you to see and go to the end of the Gospel of John, John 20. It's not the exact end but reasonably stated, it's the end of where John wants to take us before he goes into some final matters in John 21. We'll look at this passage more next week or the week after, depending on how far we go, but you remember the story of Thomas. We have looked at this passage in the past and Jesus appears in the room, Thomas had been doubting that Christ was alive and he emphatically says, "I won't believe in him unless I can see him alive and put my hand into his side." Well, in verse 27, Jesus appears before Thomas in his resurrected body and he says, "Thomas, reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." What is Thomas's response to that manifestation of the resurrection? Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God." He ascribes deity to Christ and John after that statement, immediately goes into why the Gospel was written.

Look at verse 30, "many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." So watch this, I love these big picture looks at the big books of the Bible. Sometimes it's really easy to miss them but if you see these big factors in place, it helps you understand and it just opens wonderful vistas of understanding to you. This is one of

those times. The Gospel of John opens with an assertion of the deity of Christ, "The Word was God." It ends with Thomas affirming how the Gospel began, looks at Jesus Christ and says, "You are my God." An absolute, unqualified statement of deity. Those are the bookends, those are the pillars by which that we understand the rest of the Gospel of John. We are to start and end there and as we go through the Gospel of John, we are to see its stunning testimony to the absolute deity of our Lord Jesus Christ with the end that once that is established, that you would believe in Christ for eternal life. And how would you believe in Christ for eternal life? You would make the same confession that Thomas made. You would look at Christ, believe in his resurrection and say, "Oh, my Lord and my God," that that would be the point of faith. Thomas is an illustration of the faith that the Gospel of John is designed to lead you to; a statement of receiving him in his resurrected glory and receiving him as Lord, receiving him as God. That is the only kind of saving faith that there is and the Gospel of John establishes this deity of Christ.

So we say this and we say it hopefully graciously, but we want to say it emphatically and clearly. I like to be clear more than anything. If you're clear, then other things can sort themselves out. Beloved, you know this but we need to say it again and again and again, and sometimes you young people need to hear it as well: it is not a general belief in God that will save you. Scripture says that the demons believe in God and tremble. So it's not a general belief in God, it's not an awareness that there is a divine being that can save your soul, the content of faith is greater and deeper than that. You must believe in the true Christ or you will die in your sins and so we say graciously but clearly, we say definitively: don't ever let a Jehovah's Witness or a Mormon tell you that they are Christians just like you are and they say, "Well, we believe in Jesus too." No, it doesn't work that way. You must believe in the true Christ and the true Christ is God Incarnate. God always, God equal with the Father. Jesus is God in the sense that he never had a beginning. There was never a time where Christ was not, to use some of the language that helped settle the Arian controversy in the fourth century. You need to understand that we must define who Jesus is. We must define him according to biblical terms and anyone who makes up a different Jesus is believing in a God of their own making and that God cannot save them any more than if you cobbled up a few rocks and built a pillar in front of your house and worshiped at that pillar, that pillar could do nothing for you. In the same way, a false Christ can do nothing for you. You must believe in the true Christ if you are to be saved and the true Christ is God Incarnate and that is what the Gospel of John is going to show us here this week and next, perhaps the following week, I don't know. It depends on how far we go. We have seven points for you altogether in this little series. We'll try to do three or four tonight.

How do we know that Jesus Christ is God based on the testimony of Scripture? Here's your first point: the Bible calls Jesus God. The Bible calls Jesus God. In unambiguous terms without any quivering or qualification, Scripture declares the deity of Jesus Christ. Go back to John 1:1 where we began just a short time ago. John 1:1 which says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then drop down to verse 14, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." So this Word which was God became flesh, a clear reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, and in that

opening statement in John 1, the phrase that "the Word was God," is a statement of what the quality of this Word was. Who is he by nature? What is the quality that defines his very essence and existence? He is God. He was God.

Stated this way, let me say this: I realize that Jehovah's Witnesses have butchered John 1:1 and go out of their way to distort what it clearly says and means. Let me just tell you that I have a full-length message dealing with just this verse and dealing with Jehovah's Witnesses and the treatment of it. If you encounter Jehovah's witnesses, if you are a Jehovah's Witness and you want help on that verse, we have a 65 minute message on that that I would be delighted to point you to in time to come. We're not going to deal with that here because a lot of it is so technical but with that said, everything that God is, Jesus Christ is. Every attribute of God is also fully an attribute of Jesus Christ. The essence of God, the deity that belongs exclusively to God, also fully belongs to this Word that is named in John 1:1. So when verse 14 says that "the Word became flesh," what it's saying is that Jesus Christ took on humanity without any loss of his deity. He did not leave behind his deity in heaven and become a mere human. As he walked in human flesh 2,000 years ago, he was walking fully God in fully human flesh. Two natures in one person. God made himself known in an historical man, Jesus Christ.

We read as we were opening the service, Colossians 2:9, "in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." All the fullness of deity dwells in Christ in bodily form. What does that mean except that all of God is present in Jesus Christ and so the Bible calls Jesus God. That alone would settle the matter but having established that, that this is the way that the Gospel of John is framed, it goes on, and as the Gospel of John unfolds, John is giving numerous signs and numerous things that Jesus said to reinforce this assertion of his deity. It doesn't simply make the statement and then move onto something else, what the Gospel of John is doing is giving an extended discourse of the life and ministry and words of Jesus Christ that proved that he is deity.

So it doesn't leave it at the bare assertion, it shows you what Jesus did in order to verify his claim. He did things that only God could do which brings us to our second point: Jesus does the works of God. Jesus does the works of God. What God does, Jesus does, in other words. No one else can say that. Look at John 5, beginning in verse 16. These are selected highlights, of course. You're used to that from news programs or sports newscasts that just show you highlights of the game to give you a flavor of what happened. Here we are giving highlights from the Gospel of John that help establish the deity of Christ.

Look at John 5:16, and Jesus found opposition in his ministry. That's kind of the way things go in ministry. In verse 16, "the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath." He was doing these things on the Sabbath. He had healed a man, told him to pick up his palette and walk, and the Jews didn't like that because it violated their little Sabbath rules and so they are down on Jesus.

In verse 17, "He answered them saying, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.'" That's a more staggering claim than it might seem. Jesus appealed to God

the Father in order to justify his actions. What he's saying is, "God the Father is working on the Sabbath." Think about it. Of course God is working on the Sabbath because God is continually upholding the universe by his sovereign, directing, omnipotent, providential hand. God never ceases working in his providence and Jesus says, "My Father is working," and he puts himself on the same level as God and says, "I Myself am working and therefore your claims, your objections about what I do on the Sabbath are invalid." He puts himself on the same level as God the Father and asserts the same prerogatives as God the Father.

Now watch this, you might say, "That's a lot to get out of those two verses." Well, do you know what? The Jews understood exactly what he was saying. Look at verse 18, "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself," what? "Equal with God." They understood what Jesus was saying. He says, "I am equal with God the Father. I am on same plane with him. I do the same things he does. I am equal in authority to him. I have the same prerogatives he does." That can only be true of God. No created being could say such things. No one with lesser power could say such things. And notice this, the Jews say, "You're making yourself out equal to be God, we're going to stone you! We're going to kill you for that! That's blasphemy!" Don't you think that if they had misunderstood Jesus and that they had misunderstood and Jesus wasn't making an assertion of deity in that point, what would the Lord have done if he was not God? He'd say, "Guys, somehow you missed it, that's not what I was saying at all! You don't need to stone me because that's not the claim that I'm making! I'm saying something else!" If they were going to stone him for blasphemy, for claiming to be God, if he wasn't God, then he had a duty and an obligation to correct their misunderstanding. That's not what he does. He reasserts and deepens his assertion of equality with God as it goes on in verse 19.

Look at it with me, "Jesus answered and was saying to them." I love the way Jesus never flinches in the face of opposition. I appreciate the courage of our Lord and Savior. "Jesus answered and was saying to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner'; whatever God does, I do, he says, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." For Jesus to say, "I do whatever the Father does," is an assertion of deity. It's a statement of absolute equality to the Father. He can say that because they have the exact same nature. Jesus is undiminished, uncreated deity and when he says he does whatever the Father does, look at the claim, look at the assertions that he makes in the midst of this. These are things that no mere human can do.

Verse 21, "God raises the dead and gives them life, the Son give life to whomever He wishes." Verse 22, "God has given all judgment to the Son." Verse 23, "He deserves, the

Son deserves the same honor that is given to the Father." They honor the Son just as they honor the Father. That's the call. In like measure, in equal surrender, in equal worship, honor the Father just as you honor the Son and honor the Son just as you honor the Father. Those who do not give equal honor to the Son that they give to the Father, are dishonoring the Father, Jesus says. Because he shares the power and authority of God, you must honor him to the same degree that you honor the Father. There should be no space between the two. It's an incredible claim.

Now, keep this in mind as you read that. Jesus says, "Whatever the Father does, I do." It's one thing to say that, it's another thing to go out and prove it. Anybody can mouth words like that but what did Jesus do? He verified it. He proved it with a series of signs during his ministry that established his absolute authority as God in human flesh. We won't turn to all these passages although maybe I should, at a little bit of a pivot point here. Our point here is that Jesus does the works of God. I'm going to give you seven signs that he did.

First of all, he turned water into wine, John 2. He asserted creative power over natural elements. He turned water into wine. You and I can't do that, not just by the spoken word which is what Jesus did in John 2. Secondly, he healed the royal official's son in John 4. He healed the paralytic in John 5. So he turned the water into wine, John 2. I know some of you are getting hand cramps already trying to keep up with me so let me just pause and repeat myself and for those of you keeping score at home, he healed the royal official's son in John 4. He healed the paralytic in John 5. Fourthly, he fed 5,000 people in John 6 with just a tiny bit of food. Also in John 6, he walked on water. In John 9, he healed the man born blind from birth. Have you ever seen anyone do that? A man born blind from birth, Jesus applies a little spittle to dirt and gives him his sight. Finally, number 7, he raised Lazarus from the dead in John 11.

Seven different signs. Any single one of them would have independently verified his claim. The cumulative impact of asserting his deity and verifying it by these miracles is absolutely undeniable. So number 1: he turned the water into wine, John 2. Number 2: he healed the royal official's son, John 4. Number 3: he healed the paralytic, John 5. Number 4: he fed the 5,000 in John 6. Number 5: he walked on water, John 6. Try that at home. Walk on your swimming pool if you have one. Step out on the Ohio River on the way home. You know what would happen to you, that didn't happen to Jesus. Why? Because he's God. Sixth, he healed the man born blind from birth. Born blind or he was blind from birth. Of course he was born blind if it was from birth. John 9. And number 7: he raised Lazarus from the dead, John 11.

Beloved, there is something that should be happening here in your mind as we talk about these things. There should be rising in your mind this sense of elevation as for many of us we're looking at these things again, for some of you perhaps for the first time seeing these things, seeing Christ elevated out of the pages of Scripture and seeing the surpassing greatness of his nature and realizing that he is unique, that there is no one like him. His uniqueness is found not just that he was a good moral teacher or that he pointed us to the way to God, no, the elevation that is taking place in your mind is the manifestation of the

deity of Christ. Why? Because the Bible calls him God. Because Jesus does the works of God. Only someone who is equal to God does the works of God. Not in a stage crafted environment, not with an earpiece in his ear telling him who to call on next which is the MO for the charismatic movement. Jesus did it by the assertion of his power over the elements which he himself created. He is God and we worship him as such.

Now, thirdly, let me give you another one here: Jesus has the name of God. Jesus has the name of God and let's step back for just a second and just think about something that we kind of presuppose but this will just kind of help bring it clear in our minds. If you think about it, what does your name do for you? What your name does for you in one way, there are a lot of things I suppose we could say, but what your name does is it distinguishes you from everybody else. I say, "I'm Don Green." Well, you know, what that does, in one sense there is implied in that that I'm Don Green and you're not. You're David and I'm not. You're Matt and I'm not. Our names distinguish us from one another. There is a unique nature about our name that asserts who we are in our very being. Well, to a much greater extent, the name of God is unique and it distinguishes him from everyone else in a much much greater way than our human names do.

You know, there are lots of people that have my same name in the world. I've often wanted, this has nothing to do with anything, this is just a little breather for us. I've often thought, I have wanted so much to go onto Facebook and just search for every Don Green that there was and just send a friend request and then it would come up, "Don Green is now friends with Don Green." I think that would be really funny but that has nothing to do with this, but it says something about names, I guess.

Point number 3: Jesus has the name of God. Jesus has the name of God. And to establish this point, we need to look back at the Old Testament for just a moment. Look at Exodus 3 with me, if you would. Exodus 3. Boy, do you remember when we went through these Old Testament books a couple of years ago? Wasn't that wonderful? I enjoyed that a lot. I'm enjoying this a lot too. I hope God gives us many years together to be able to share his word with one another, is what I hope.

Exodus 3:13. This is after the burning bush. God has revealed himself to Moses and he sends him to the people of Israel and in verse 13, Moses has an important question on his mind. He said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" So Moses says, "God, what is your name?" And God answers him and said to Moses in verse 14, "'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "'I AM has sent me to you.'"" So a person's name represents his identity. It sets him apart. I am, Yahweh, identifies God with an exclusivity that precluded all rivals. It sets him apart. It is his unique name by which he is known and by which he has made himself revealed. He has manifested himself by this name, I am.

Now, keep that in mind as we go back to the Gospel of John 8, beginning in verse 52. There is a debate over the identity of Jesus, again with the Jews as they are opposing him. John 8:52, "The Jews said to Him, 'Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died,

and the prophets also; and You say, "If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death." Now they had this esteem, they had this reverence for Abraham and the prophets and these men spoke the word of God and yet they were dead. Jesus has been speaking, "If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death," and so it is putting his words on a plane above those that they most revered from the Old Testament.

Now in verse 53, the Jews said, "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too," watch this, "whom do You make Yourself out to be?" They are asking Jesus, they are putting his identity into question. They are laying the issue on the table, "Who are you?"

Verse 54, "Jesus answered, 'If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, "He is our God"; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.'" Verse 57, "the Jews said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?'" Abraham lived 2,000 years prior to this event being described here in John 8. Jesus said, "Abraham saw My day." It's an assertion of preexistence and they get the point and they say, "What are you saying? Are you saying that you who are not even 50 years old, you have seen Abraham who lived 2,000 years ago? What are you saying? Who are you?"

And Jesus says in the simplicity and clarity of his word, he says in verse 58, "Truly, truly," verily, verily, certainly, certainly, "I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." I am. He takes the unique name of God upon himself. He says that, "Before Abraham was born, I am." Think about it: that is almost a grammatical impossibility what he's saying, in one sense. You know, before he was, it makes you expect a past tense statement. Jesus delivers the present tense statement instead, asserting the name of God, claiming it for himself, saying, "Before Abraham was, I am." The name of God, "Before Abraham was, I am. I have always been God. I am God." There it is laid out for you. He took the name of God for himself. He didn't just claim superiority to Abraham, he took that sacred expression of divine self-revelation and said, "That's me." Staggering, astonishing that a man in human flesh would say something like that, and yet we remember that he's done all of these works that only God could do. There is no denying it. It is perfectly appropriate for Jesus to take that name upon himself because he is fully equal with God.

The Jews understood it. They knew what he was saying. Look at verse 59, "Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him." Why? Because they wanted to stone him for blasphemy. But it wasn't yet Jesus' time, "He hid Himself and went out of the temple." He was claiming equality with God.

So what have we seen? We've seen that the Bible calls Jesus God: John 1; Colossians 2, 10,000 other places. We've seen that Jesus does the works of God in seven distinct ways that we listed out from the earlier half of the Gospel of John. Thirdly, we see Jesus taking the name of God to himself. He claims deity. He proves deity. Do you know why he claims it? Because it's true. Do you know why he can do the things of deity? Because he's

God. Do you know why he takes the name of God? Because it's appropriate because he is. This is all just within the Gospel of John.

There is one more for tonight and we'll stop with this one. We'll put it this way: Jesus has full unity with God the Father. Jesus has full unity with God the Father. Jesus is one with the Father. Look over at John 10. We'll read a more extended portion of Scripture here at this point in our message. John 10:22, "At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, 'How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.'" I respect the forbearance of our Lord. You know, he could have flicked them away like a fly by the assertion of his power but he just dealt with it as he faithfully walked to the cross where he would give himself for our sins; he endured the hostility of sinners against himself willingly in order to fulfill the mission that the Father had given to him. You know, we not only worship him as deity, we respect him. We revere him. We marvel at the perfect humanity that he manifests even in response to opposition. Sometimes it's in the midst of opposition that godliness finds itself manifested, it becomes the occasion, the platform where that is done.

Verse 25, "Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me.'" You see, Jesus is making the same point that we are tonight, "Go back to my works. See what my works have said. I've done these works but you don't believe. You see, the problem isn't that I haven't made things clear, the problem is not that I haven't proven my claim, the problem is you refuse to believe. That's the problem. There is no lack of evidence. There is no lack of clarity. You're just hard in your unbelief," Jesus says to them. Nothing has changed in 2,000 years. You lay these things out before any unbelieving person and unless the Spirit of God opens their minds and softens their heart, they will just walk away hard and cold as when you started. Why? Not because the evidence is lacking, not because Scripture isn't true, not because Jesus isn't God, not because the Spirit doesn't have power. None of that. Out on that suggestion. It's a cold-hearted stubborn refusal to believe that which is evident.

Look at what Jesus says, verse 26, "you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Isn't that sweet, that Jesus would look on us now 2,000 years later, here we are, we're Christians, we belong to Christ, we have been born again, he has brought us into his family and he delights, he's glad to call us his sheep. We belong to him and he belongs to us in this great saving act that he has done in our lives: saving us, redeeming us, causing us to be born again, bringing us to himself, reconciling us to God, giving us a new nature, imparting the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. His sheep. His flock. We belong to him. We know his voice. And sweetest of all, better than that, Jesus says, "I know them and they follow Me."

What has he done for us? What does he do for his sheep? Verse 28, notice the first person singular as Jesus Christ speaks. He says, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." Jesus says, "I am the Author of their eternal life. I give it to them in a way that guarantees that they will never perish. No

one will snatch them out of my hand." In other words, he saves us and then he keeps us. That's one reason among many that we believe in the perseverance of the saints, that those whom Christ saves, he keeps; those that he makes his sheep, he keeps in the fold forever, never to be lost. What kind of shepherd would let his sheep wander away to be eaten by wolves? Not our Shepherd. Not the Lord Jesus Christ. He keeps his sheep and he'll keep you. If you know Christ, he's keeping you. He has given you eternal life and no one is going to take it away from you. He has forgiven your sins, no one is going to charge you before the bar of God again. People might try to dissuade you, Christ says, "They can't snatch them out of my hand. No one will snatch them out of my hand."

It reminds me of the passage that we read in Colossians, let's go back there for just a moment here as, once again, the speaker goes off on a tangent but this one is worth pursuing. Colossians 2:13. What did our Shepherd do for us? In what sense are we his sheep and what are the consequences for the security of your soul? Ah, beloved, you ought to be drinking this in and luxuriating in the greatness of who Christ is and what he has done for us. There is no greater theme that could ever be discussed on human soil and I'm glad to say that in the midst of a political convention that's going on simultaneously as I say it. There is nothing greater than the theme of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Nothing.

So what did our Shepherd do for us? Verse 13 of Colossians 2, "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." Not some of them, all of them. He has "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." Purgatory is an absolute lie of the Catholic Church. There is absolutely no reason for further punishment after you die. Why? Because the punishment that was laid on Christ at the cross was full, complete, and satisfied God forever. There is no further price to be paid for your sins. Christ paid it all, nailed it the cross. That certificate of decree against you, is never to be raised again.

Not only that, verse 15, "He disarmed the rulers and authorities." All of the satanic host, the supernatural evil forces that are arrayed against your soul disarmed at the hand of Christ. There is no fear for a Christian. Satan can't lay a hand on us in the ultimate sense of taking us out of the hand of Christ. Your sins won't be raised against you again. Why? Because Christ nailed them to the cross. He paid the full price for them there. Do you start to see that to be a Christian, to be one of the lambs of Christ is to be on the receiving end of a magnificent act of redemptive love, to be in a position of such utter security on the receiving end of an eternal love from God through his Son Jesus Christ, that you are in a position of superlative privilege that will never be taken away from you. I think that's pretty great, don't you?

Go back to John 10. With that little bit of fleshing out, if you will, John 10:28, read this with a fresh sense of appreciation and devotion to your Lord. He says, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." Verse 29, "My Father, who has given them to Me," we've talked about that, a love gift from

God the Father to Jesus Christ, that's who the people of Christ are, "is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." So he's making this parallel statement, "They can't snatch them out of my hand, they can't snatch them out of the Father's hand." There is complete parallel going on here. And sometimes silly people who twist and distort the Scripture try to take one little phrase out of context and say, "Oh, but it says the Father is greater than all so he's greater than Christ and Christ is therefore not God."

What a foolish damnable twisting of Scripture to try to distort the word of God when Jesus is saying the exact opposite of that as shown for certain when he says in verse 30, when he says, "I and the Father are one. My Father is greater than all, I am one with him and therefore I am greater than all," Jesus says. And those who twist and distort the Scriptures on this point are doing so to their own destruction and it's not because the Bible isn't clear. And believe me, if Jesus was in any way diminishing his deity, there would have been an opportunity to clear it up here just like there was before. What is Jesus saying? Jesus is saying, "I give eternal life. No one snatches them out of my hand. The Father does the same thing." In other words, they are united in will, power and action. Why? Because they share a single essence. For Jesus to be one with God expresses his deity. He has full unity with God the Father.

Now watch this, you don't have to just go on what I'm saying here. Just keep reading the Scripture. The Jews who were there at that moment when Jesus said that understood exactly what he was saying. They knew exactly that he was claiming deity. Verse 31, "The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him." This seems to become a repeated theme. You know, when the Jews want to disbelieve, what do they do? They play with rocks. "The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?'" Is it because I fed people miraculously? Is it because I walked on water? Is it because I healed a man born blind? Is that why you're stoning me, because of all these good things that I have done? "The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy,'" watch it here, "'because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.'" They understood. Jesus here in this passage in John 10 is asserting his deity. He says it in ways that are undeniable. The Jews understood it that way.

So let's wrap it up here. My non-Christian friend, when the Bible calls on you to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, there is a specific content to that call. The Bible is calling on you to believe that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, that he is God in human flesh. It's not calling on you to make a wishy-washy sentimental expression of affection to some vague Jesus. No, Scripture has revealed him with great astonishing clarity that he is God in human flesh and the Bible calls on you to believe in Christ in that manner, in accordance with the claims that Christ made about himself. That is part of the call to saving faith.

We'll say it one more time: you cannot make up your own Jesus and be saved. "Well, my Jesus wouldn't do..." Your Jesus doesn't matter. The only Jesus that matters is Jesus. You must believe in Christ for who he really is. Do you know him? Do you claim him? Do

you profess him as Lord and God? Anything less falls short of true saving faith. God seeks those who will worship him in spirit and in truth through the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the rest of us, kind of gathered together here around the sweetness of the glory of Christ, we who have believed in him have not believed in vain. We have believed in one who is God Incarnate and because that is who he really is, when we come to him for salvation he has the power and he has the authority to save us to the uttermost without fail. He will never lose you in the process. The merit of his blood shed on the cross for your soul was of infinite value. The righteousness is the very righteousness of God that he shares with you and covers you with before a holy God. Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, our Lord, we bow in worship before you.

Let's pray. I invite you to receive Christ if you haven't.

Father, for those of us that know you, we thank you for sending your Son. Lord Jesus, we thank you for taking on human flesh. God, we thank you that you didn't simply appoint a proxy and make someone else and create another being to do the dirty work of redemption. Lord Jesus, you did it yourself. You left your rightful glorious place in heaven and descended to this earth in order to save sinners like us and when you went to the cross, it was God Incarnate hanging there exposed, feeling the weight of the imputation of our sins and the punishment of God crashing down upon your blessed soul. You stood alone to intercede for us and we thank you for that. We know, we affirm, we believe, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts that you did not die in vain but that all that the Father gave to you will eventually come to you; that all that the Father gave to you, you will certainly and completely save, and now that we belong to you, you will certainly keep us forever and ever and ever. Amen. We bless your name and we bow before you and with Thomas, we gladly look to you, Lord Jesus, and gladly, humbly proclaim, "My Lord and my God." Amen.

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