

The Deity of Jesus

God with Us, Pt. 1

Allan McCullough
Grace Hill Church
December 3, 2017



I. PRAYER

- i. God would you help us to have a better understanding of who Jesus is. Help us to have greater faith in Him. Help us to love Him more. Above all, help us to trust him with being first in every part of our lives.

II. INTRODUCTION

a. Earlier, Erica and Terry read from Isaiah 9 for us.

- i. This is a prophecy that God gave his people promising them that one day, a Messiah would come to establish God's Kingdom.
 - This Messiah will be the one who will establish throne of King David, he is the one who will establish his government and it will never be challenged.
- ii. Read Micah 5:1-6
 - *"Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. But you, O Bethlehem, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great*



to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.”

1. Here is another prophecy.
2. This one is a bit more militaristic.
3. This Messiah will bring us peace from our enemies!

iii. **See, the Nation of Israel had always been under threat from other enemy nations.**

- Their slavery in Egypt.
- Their captivity by the Babylonians, Persians, and Assyrians.
- Now, as we approach the time of Jesus, we have the Roman Occupation of the Nation of Israel.

iv. **So, naturally, when the Israelites read these prophecies about a coming Messiah who would liberate them from their enemies and establish the Kingdom of God...**

- ...they pictured someone who was coming with a sword in his hand ready to deal out justice.
- They pictured someone who would bring down the Roman empire.
- They pictured someone who would establish a political and militaristic rule for the Nation of Israel.
- And they were waiting...

b. And yet, most of them missed it.

- i. As this small child was born to the virgin Mary and Joseph...in a stable in this small of Bethlehem that most people had never heard of...



- The Messiah, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords...had made his entrance into this world.
- ii. **And see, the Scriptures tell us that that newborn child laying in that stable...was in fact God.**
 - That newborn child would himself defeat death.
 - That newborn child would in fact establish the Kingdom of God.
- iii. **There is something backwards about this picture, right?**
 - The all-powerful king of kings in the form of a newborn child in a small, insignificant town.
 - It certainly would not be how we would script such a story and it certainly was not what the Nation of Israel was looking for.
 - And the salvation that he brings is certainly not what we would expect from God.

c. We are beginning the season of Advent, this morning.

- i. This is a time where we reflect on the first advent of Jesus Christ...the first coming of Jesus Christ.
 - And Advent is a good time for us to study and reflect on the person of Jesus Christ.
 - Who is Jesus?
 - Who is this child who was born, lived a quiet life for 30 years, and then executed the plan of salvation through his life, his death, and his resurrection.
- ii. **And so this morning, I want to spend some time studying the deity of Jesus Christ.**



- The fact that Jesus is God.
- iii. Next week we are going to look at the humanity of Jesus Christ.
 - The fact that Jesus is human.
 - He is 100% God, 100% human.
- iv. And so, this morning, to study the deity of Jesus, I want us to look at Colossians 1:15-20.
 - Because in this letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Colossae, he writes this beautiful paragraph about the deity of Jesus Christ.
 1. As Christians we believe in what we call the Trinity.
 2. The truth that there is only one God, but this God exists in three distinct persons.
 3. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - And this morning, my goal is that all of us would see that the truth that Jesus is God...
 1. ...not that Jesus is a god, or one of the gods, or an expression of god...
 - ...but the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, the second person of the trinity, is non-negotiable and is critical to the message of the gospel.
 1. That if Jesus is not God, then the gospel we believe just simply is not true and does not work.

III. COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

a. Read Colossians 1:15-20

- i. There is so much packed into this little text, you could preach countless sermons on it.



- ii. However, I want us to see this passage as a whole this morning...
 - And I would like to unpack it in four points.

IV. POINT #1 – JESUS IS HOW WE KNOW GOD

a. Look at the beginning of verse 15 with me.

- i. In other words, if you want to know who God is and what God is like, you need to look to Jesus.
 - John 1:18 (CSB) - *“No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side—he has revealed him.”*
 - Hebrews 1:1-3 - *“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...”*
 - Back to Colossians 1:19
- ii. So, the Bible is very clear here that we know who God is by looking to Jesus because Jesus is God.

b. So, let me ask you: What is your impression of God?

- i. You know, the man upstairs who is so mysterious.
- ii. What image of God do you have in your head?



- Is God this nagging parent who is always following you around shaking his head at everything you do wrong?
 - Is God this genie that we try and please so he'll bend the forces of nature for us into our favor.
 - Is God a self-help strategy that really doesn't exist but is helpful to our psyche?
 - Is God this bigot who loves only a certain race, only a certain gender, only a certain political party and you want nothing to do with him.
- iii. **What image of God do you have in your head?**
- Because in order to be intellectually consistent with what the Bible has to say, the image of God that we should ascribe to the God of the Bible and the Christian faith is found nowhere but in the person of Jesus.
 - It is through looking at Jesus that we know God.
 1. It's through looking at Jesus do we know his character.
 2. It's through looking at Jesus that we know his temperament.
 3. It's through looking at Jesus do we know his plans and purpose.
 - And so whatever image of God that we have in our heads, we should test against the person of Jesus Christ that we read about in Scripture.
- iv. **And you know what we read about Jesus in Colossians 1...**



V. POINT #2 – JESUS HAS ULTIMATE POWER & AUTHORITY

a. Read v.16-17 with me.

- i. These two verses are enormous.

b. Here is what we learn about this newborn child lying in the manger in that small town.

- i. We learn that he is the means throughout which everything was created.
 - That as God the Father issued the decree for the creation to come into existence, Jesus played the role of executing that decree.
- ii. But not only was everything created through Jesus, we also learn here that everything is sustained and held together by Jesus.
 - Hebrews 1:3 continues as well and says that Jesus, *“upholds the universe by the word of his power.”*
 - Jesus sustains our world right now by his authority and his power.
 1. He sustains our physical world. It is by his authority, his design, and his power that protons and neutrons stick together to form the nucleus of an atom which is surrounded by electrons which allows atoms to stick together to create the very fabric of our physical world.
 2. It is by his authority and his power that he sustains our world morally so that we do not utterly destroy ourselves and subvert his plan for all of creation.
- iii. Not only that, we also see that all authority is concentrated into Jesus.



- He is the one who created (v.16) “...*thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities...*”
 1. This refers to both authority in the physical world and authority in the spiritual world.
 2. Nothing happens outside of the authority of Jesus and no one can challenge his authority and ultimately win.
- A good example of this is in Matthew 23.
 1. Jesus is with his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane and the authorities came to arrest Jesus.
 2. And one of the disciples sought to defend Jesus and drew a sword and cut off the ear of one of the servants of the chief priest.
 3. And Jesus rebuked his disciple and said...listen, if it wasn't in my plan to be arrested tonight, then it would happen. I could call down here 12 legions of angels to defend me.
 4. You know how many are in a legion? Thousands. So, twelve legions would be tens of thousands of angels.
 5. You know what one angel can do?
 6. Well, in 2 Kings 19, one angel took down the Assyrians Army, 185,000 men, in one night.
 7. So, what do you think 12 legions of angels could do?
- This was Jesus way of saying, I have all authority. These people think they are taking me by force. This is all in my plan.

c. So, here is what we know so far.



- i. #1 - Jesus is the image of God. If we want to know who God is and what God is like, we look to Jesus.
- ii. #2 - Jesus, Himself, has ultimate power and authority. He will not be challenged.
- iii. So, in our world, how do we typically think of or portray people who are powerful, figures of authority, people of great might, those who are unchallengeable?
 - How do we treat the President of the United States or any other head of state?
 1. We roll out the red carpet.
 2. We salute.
 3. We lavish them with a luxurious lifestyle.
 - As other nations threaten our national security, what do we do?
 1. We show our military might. We demonstrate our capabilities. We issue threats.
 - What do people who want to be seen as powerful do?
 1. They tend to impose their desired authority and power on others.
 2. They abuse.
 3. They demonstrate how their power is greater than others.
- iv. So, one would expect that if Jesus is going to be the one who demonstrates to us the character, the power, and the abilities of God and that he himself has all power and authority, we would see a grand display of strength and power, right?
 - But what do we see?



1. We see a rather uneventful, humble entry onto the planet in a stable born to parents who are not wealthy or influential.
 2. Jesus doesn't arrive here as this big, strong deity flaunting his divine power.
 3. He becomes a human being and takes on the weakness and frailty of humanity all the while sustaining the entire universe.
- There is deep, deep irony in the first advent of Jesus.
 1. An irony that we will explore next week as we look deeper into the humanity of Jesus.
- v. **But it begs the question...why did Jesus in all of his power and in all of his authority choose to come into the world with us in this way?**
- If the world really had descended into sin, if the world really had rebelled against God, and if God was just to unleash his wrath and judgement on his own creation for rejecting his authority...which is all true....
 - ...why did God Himself show up as just a newborn baby in an insignificant family?
- vi. **What does this irony tell us about the character of God?**
- How might this dichotomy of Jesus, who has ultimate power and authority yet he comes as a frail newborn...change the image of God that we have in our heads and hearts?



VI. POINT #3 – JESUS IS HIMSELF THE RECONCILER

a. Which is another way of saying, that in our need to be reconciled to God, God himself takes the first step and himself is the reconciler.

i. Read v.19-20

b. Have you ever been in conflict with someone and there is just tension between both of you.

i. You're not really talking to one another because you're upset.

- And your pride won't let you be the first to take a step towards reconciliation.
- And it usually takes a lot of humility for the first person to step forward and seek reconciliation.

ii. And in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in the first advent of Jesus Christ, God is taking a step towards us so that we can be reconciled with him.

- Even though he is the offended party, Jesus humbled himself by stepping out of heaven and into humanity so reconciliation could occur.
- Jesus took on human flesh so he could take on human sin and shed human blood so he could stand in our place and absorb the wrath and the judgement of God.
- Making peace between us and God.
 1. This is how you are made right with God. By believing that Jesus is the Son of God and he came and paid for your sins on the cross and then rose again as your Lord whom you follow.



iii. Jesus, the only way we know anything about God, uses all of his power and all of his authority to step into our shoes and rescue us.

- The rich and powerful usually expect to be served.
- But Jesus says: “[I] came not to be served but to serve, and to give [my] life as a ransom for many.” -Matthew 20:28

c. Just in case you're wondering, this is what makes Christianity distinct from any other faith or religion.

i. Yes, our God is all powerful. Yes, he is perfectly holy and he will not tolerate sin or unrighteousness.

- But as we look at the means through which he comes to us in and through the first advent of Jesus...
 1. And as we look upon the life that Jesus lived and how he accomplished peace through the blood of His cross...
- We are able to understand who God is and what his character is like...
 1. And we see that he is a gracious, merciful god who doesn't give us a cold, dead law to follow to earn his love but rather he gives us himself.

ii. **As many of you know, my wife and I adopted our youngest daughter.**

- And we had many different court appearances during that process.
- And I'll never forget when our case with our daughter was transferring from a Foster Care Case to an Adoption Case, this also signaled a move of our case from the Family Court to the Circuit Court.



- And we were in our final court appearance in family court and we had, at that time, seen the same judge several times over.
 - But in that final court appearance as the judge was wrapping up he stood up...
 1. Came down off the bench...
 2. Making his bailiff nervous but he waved him down...
 3. And he came over to Kim and I as we were sitting on the benches behind all the lawyers.
 4. And he shook my hand and my wife's hand...and he proceeded to say some very nice/personal things to us. We showed him pictures of our daughter on the phone.
 - And the fact that the judge would do that, meant a lot to Kim and I.
 1. It meant a lot that out of all of the cases he had, all of the decisions that he had to make, out of all the court appearances on his docket for that day, he took the time to come down off of his bench to encourage my wife and I.
- iii. **That is the God of the Bible. He is the creator of all things. He sustains all things. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. He is the judge.**
- And yet in the midst of our sin and rebellion, he stood up and came down to us.
- iv. **Every other system of faith wants to give you all the things you must do so you can make your way up to God.**
- But the only, true God reveals himself to us in Jesus Christ as He comes down to us.



- v. And it is exactly because Jesus is the image of God, it is exactly because He has all power and authority, and it is exactly because he is the one who stepped out first to make reconciliation...

VII. POINT #4 – JESUS IS PREEMINENT

a. In other words, Jesus must be first in everything.

- i. Read v.15b – Not that he is the first created being, but as he stepped into creation, he holds the title of firstborn, a title of respect and blessing.
- ii. Read 17a – He is first!
- iii. Read v.18a – When he died on the cross, he was raised to new life so that we could be raised to new life so he is the firstborn of the dead!
 - He is the head of the church because it is through our union with Jesus that we join the church!
- iv. Therefore, read v.18b

b. Let me break this down for you...

- i. Jesus is who made us and Jesus is the one who saves us and then continues to sustain us...
 - All for the purpose of his preeminence in all of creation and in every part of our lives.
 - 1. So that he would be first.
 - And you might say: That's selfish! That's arrogant. That's narcissistic.
 - 1. No.
 - 2. See, Jesus is the image of God. He is the exact imprint of his nature. All of the fullness of God is pleased to dwell in Jesus.



3. And the means of his advent into our world and how he accomplishes salvation tells us that God is not some narcissistic bully but...
- Maybe just maybe we were designed and created for God to be preeminent in every part of our lives, and that is where our joy is found, and God is leading us to life and not away from it.
 1. Maybe just maybe as we gaze into the character of Jesus and therefore the character of God we can be convinced that when we reject him and allow other things to be first in our life, we rob ourselves of joy and we volunteer ourselves for pain and frustration.
 - Maybe, just maybe, Jesus came into the world in the manner that he did, and he accomplished salvation in the manner that he did because he wants to win our hearts affection, not just coerce it through his authority and power.

c. So, let me lovingly exhort all of us this morning and say this:

- i. **Jesus, our God, must be preeminent in everything. Everything!**
 1. First-place in our families.
 2. First-place in our marriages.
 3. First-place in our professions.
 4. First-place in this church.
 5. First-place in how we study the world.
 6. First-place in your schedule and calendar.
 7. First-place in relationships.
 8. First-place in conversation.
 9. First place in your budget.
 10. First-place in pleasures.



11. First in eating.
 12. First in play.
 13. First in athletics.
 14. First in what we watch.
 15. First-place in art.
 16. First-place in music.
 17. First-place in worship.
- ii. **Is Jesus first in every part of your life?**
- In other words: are you pursuing joy?
- iii. **He must be first in everything. He is God. He has all power and authority. He demands to be first.**
- And look at me: The manner of His advent proves to us that he is trustworthy with the responsibility of first place in our lives.

VIII. PRAY

