

7 Jesus, The Unique Savior

John 1:15-18

INTRODUCTION

Last week we covered verse 14 which told us that Jesus Christ came into the world in order to dwell (or tabernacle) among His people. And we learned that those who receive Him are adopted into God's family and have the right to be called children of God.

This week we are finishing up John's introduction. Verses 1-18 were written by John as a theological statement to defeat false theologies such as the gnostics. And He wrote it to clearly reveal the person of Jesus Christ and His plan of salvation.

In verses 15-18 John The Baptist wants to make sure everyone knows Jesus Christ is greater than him. He wants to expose to all people just how filled Jesus Christ is with the divine nature.

READING THE TEXT

John 1:15-18

¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Let's work through our text one clause at a time.

PREACHING THE TEXT

John 1:15-18

¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out,

JOHN CRYING OUT

John The Baptist did not mutter in a quiet and uncertain tone. He shouted. Here comes the Son of God in the flesh! Here comes the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John The Baptist shouted with

certainty. One does not shout unless one is convinced from the heart about that which he speaks. What did John The Baptist loudly proclaim?

15 Continued ***“This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”***)

COMES AFTER BUT RANKS BEFORE ME

That is a curious phrase; “He who comes after me ranks before me.” What is John trying to convey? Within John’s culture the one who came first is seen as the greatest in rank. For example; In John’s day there was a line of kings from Herod's family who took over the throne of Israel. The first one was the greatest and he started the ruling line and then the sons learned to rule from their father. So the first Herod was the greatest. He had the first rank in the family authority structure.

The same can be said of the relationship of Elijah and Elisha, or David and Solomon. The one who came first is the greatest because they could take some credit for the

success of his sons or successors. Elijah trained Elisha and David raised and trained Solomon. The one who is first is the greatest.

John the Baptist was called the greatest prophet by Jesus. And on a human level John's ministry came before the ministry of Jesus. John was born first and John introduced Jesus. Many would think that John was greatest because he came before Jesus.

John The Baptist was great. Jesus said about John the Baptist;

Matthew 11:11

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.

The reason John was the greatest was because of His assignment. John had the honor of introducing the creator of the universe who came in the flesh. So The Baptists greatness is rooted in his relationship to the Messiah.

Also John wants us to know Jesus Christ actually came before John the Baptist. Jesus Christ The Son of God was alive before anyone was created. Jesus was not a Junior anything! John wants to make sure everyone knows that Jesus is not one of his disciples or pupils. This is the Son of God who existed in eternity past. No one outranks God's Son.

According To Calvin

*Christ was preferred because He is more excellent.
(John must decrease so that Jesus Christ may increase)*

John handed over his disciples to Jesus because Jesus outranked him. Now John will tell us one of the ways in which Jesus outranks him.

¹⁶ ***For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.***

HIS FULLNESS WE ALL RECEIVED

Jesus had a fulness of all the spiritual blessings we need. There is never a circumstance beyond his ability to provide.

When the wine ran out at the wedding in Cana, Jesus had the fulness to provide an abundance of the highest quality wine for the feast.

When he met a woman shamed by her sin, Jesus was able to make her born again.

For a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years, Jesus had power to heal.

When a huge crowd was hungry, he took five barley loaves and two fish and fed them all, with twelve baskets left over.

For the man born blind, he had sight to give.

Even death did not exhaust his fullness, for when Lazarus lay cold in the grave, Jesus had the fullness to restore him to life.

John's gospel records those miracles, which he calls "signs" of Christ's divine nature. Jesus can provide for our needs out of his might power and love that continue to overflow like a well that never goes dry. John therefore says, "From His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

William Barkley Quote:

We need one grace in the days of prosperity and another in the days of adversity. We need one grace in the sunlit days of youth and another when the shadows of age begin to lengthen. The church needs one grace in the days of persecution and another when the days of acceptance have come. We need one grace when we feel that we are on the top of things and another when we are depressed and discouraged and near to despair.end
Barkley Quote.....

God may not give you what you ask...the world can confuse us and shape us so we ask for things that do not truly lead us toward joy, peace and godliness. But God will

give you the grace that you really need to enjoy Him, love Him and accept His plan for your life. Whatever you are going through right now, God has grace upon grace that He will continue to lavish upon you. His grace is sufficient. Pray and receive His grace for your need.

So what is your need right now? Remember the first time you noticed the grace of God in your life? Perhaps the first time you knew in your heart that God had answered your prayer? And then hundreds or perhaps thousands of times God has lavished upon you His grace, His mercy, His provision, the love and acceptance that you needed. Whatever you are going through right now, remember that our faithful God has stacked up grace upon grace upon grace in your life. He continues as a faithful God. Call on Him. If you are too weak to call on Him ask your brothers or sisters to call on Him for you. Grace upon grace is on the way. We have a great God who loves you and died for you and who adopted and loved you as His very own. Call on Him today.

GRACE UPON GRACE

Technically, *Grace upon grace* is a reference to verse 17. One grace was revealed through Moses and the law. But another grace was added on top of that grace, which is Jesus Christ the fulfillment of the law. So we had a grace of law and of knowing what pleased God and the grace of sacrifices that covered sin.

And now we have Jesus Christ the Son of God who came to make a final sacrifice to cover all sins for all time for those who are called according to His purposes and election. Grace upon Grace. God has revealed Himself to mankind and stacked one revelation of Himself upon the previous revelation.

Each time He reveals more of Himself we have a more full covenant and understanding of God. Each new revelation of Himself is greater than the last. This greater revelation of Jesus Christ and His *greater grace* revealed to mankind is given context in verse 17 says;

¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Verse 17 begins with the word; “for.” That tells us John is going to give an illustration of how God’s grace has been stacked upon God’s grace.

Jesus Himself is superior to Moses. And the truth and grace of the new covenant of salvation through faith in Christ is Superior to the grace revealed in the law.

It’s not just that the grace and truth of Jesus is superior to the law. It is a fulfillment to which the law pointed.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 ESV

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the

land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

*³³ For **this is the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

This is a reference to the covenant of grace delivered through the Lord Jesus Christ. This covenant is that Jesus Christ, through saving grace will deliver new desires to your heart so that you desire to do what is pleasing to God.

If you are born again God has written the law on your heart. He has given you new desires to follow His

commands. The law is not what saves you. The law is what happens in your life as a result of Jesus Christ saving you through grace and truth.

Now John turns his attention to reminding the reader of the greatness of God. God is greater than John and greater than any human that has ever drawn breath. Here is why and how Jesus Christ is the greatest ever.

Jesus is unique as our true Savior because of His divine person, because of His inexhaustible provision, because of His resources of grace and truth, and finally, because only He can reveal God to us. John says;

¹⁸ ***No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.***

All through the Old Testament, godly men and women longed for an intimate knowledge of God. But God could not be seen, for he dwelt, according to Solomon in;

1 Kings 8:12 “in thick darkness.

Elijah heard only **a still, small voice**. Abraham dealt with angels and saw God as a smoking firepot.

Moses had the most intimate dealings with God, standing before the burning bush and having the afterglow of God's glory shine on His face. His great longing was to look on the face of God. Moses said; "please show me your glory." But God said:

Exodus 33:20 "You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

Jesus came to provide the perfect revelation of God. John describes Him as **"the only God. who is at the Father's side."** This is why Jesus is greater than John the Baptist or Moses, not to mention Muhammad or the pope. Jesus is Himself very God of very God, one in the divine Trinity. He is in intimate fellowship of love with God the Father; literally from **KJV**, John says, Jesus is **"in the bosom of the Father."**

Before Jesus came no one could look God in the face and live. Jesus came in the flesh, God in the flesh, and

people spoke to Him every day. They saw His face and lived. God revealed Himself to men and women face to face in and through Jesus Christ.

HE HAS MADE HIM (GOD) KNOWN = Exegesis

The Greek word translated “made known” (exegesato) gives us our word exegete, a word that Bible scholars use in reference to interpreting the Bible. We are exegeting Scripture right now to give a full account of it’s meaning.

This is what Jesus does! He interprets and explains and exposit God to us. Jesus gives a full revelation of God in His teaching and example. To know what God is like and what God intends for the world, we study Jesus Christ. This is why John called Him “The Word.”

God speaks most plainly and perfectly in Him. This is what we most greatly need, and what we should all most fervently seek: to know God through Jesus Christ. As Jesus prayed to His Father:

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

Jesus is the Savior for all who are looking for someone worthy to follow.

CHALLENGE

So is Jesus your Savior? He will be if you will trust Him now. John's Gospel promises;

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life

If you have trusted Jesus, are you drawing from His grace to live for Him - for His honor and for His kingdom? Is His grace flowing through you to others?

2 Peter 3:18

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity, Amen!

TAKING IT HOME

1. When you compare Jesus to John The Baptist, or The Pope or Mohammed, do you see the fullness that only Jesus possesses?
2. Are you confident in Jesus to the point that you can cry out like John The Baptist; “Jesus Christ is The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!”
3. Do you believe in your heart Jesus Christ died for your sin and rose from the dead?
4. Are you a follower of Jesus Christ? Are you His disciple? Are you getting your life from Jesus?