

The Glorious Uniqueness of Jesus (Part 2)

John 1:14-18

BI: The mystery and glory of the incarnation of Christ should drive our souls to wonder, awe and praise.

Read John 1:14-18

Last week we began thinking about the glorious uniqueness of Jesus Christ as revealed by the apostle John at the end of the prologue of his gospel. John is laying the groundwork for the rest of his gospel by establishing Jesus' credentials as the Son of God who is worthy of our undivided faith. We only had time to look at two of the ways John presents Jesus as absolutely unique. The first of which was that...

I. Jesus Was Gloriously Unique in His Humanity:

1. John reveals in verse 14 that "The Word (Logos) became flesh." In other words, the eternal God, the Spirit who created and sustains all things did, in fact, become a man. He wasn't simply a spirit who looked like a man. Nor was He a man who possessed some of the power of God. No, He is the God-Man possessing the two natures of Deity and Humanity in one Person. He was at the same time the eternal Logos, and Jesus Christ.
2. Our focus, then, was on the glory of God's condescension, that He should stoop so low as to become a man. And He did it to save us from the just penalty of our sin.
3. Second, we learned that...

II. Jesus' Was Gloriously Unique in His Deity:

1. John says (14), and "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." The focus of thinking at this point was on the word "dwelt" which means "to pitch a tent or tabernacle." This, as we learned, is a veiled allusion to the days when Israel wandered the wilderness after escaping Egypt and were guided all those 40 years by God Himself who manifested His glory to them in the Tent of Meeting which was called the Tabernacle.
2. John was telling us that just as God pitched His tent in the middle of the camp of Israel, even so Jesus Christ came and "pitched his tabernacle" among us. He lived among His people for 33 years, and those who had eyes to see were able to behold His glory.
3. We spent most of our time last week considering the fact that every furnishing of the tabernacle (and later, the temple) was a foreshadowing of the coming Christ. The Alter of Burnt offerings; the Laver; the Lampstand; the Table of showbread; the alter of incense, and even the Ark of the Covenant all pointed to the glory of Jesus Christ. He was the fulfillment of it all!
4. More than that, he is also the perfect High Priest, the spotless sacrifice (i.e. the Lamb of God); The author of Hebrews even suggests that Jesus' body was what the veil in the temple pointed to. That curtain that separated the Holy place from the Holy of Holies and kept man at a

distance from the presence of God was torn in two from top to bottom the moment Jesus died. Why? Because the death of Jesus Christ purchased **access** to God for all who believe. Hebrews 10:19–20 says, “Therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.

5. Everything in the temple was merely a signpost pointing to Christ. They were but shadows, He is the substance. In fact, even the feast days and festivals of Israel pointed to Christ. That’s why Paul wrote to the church of Colossae saying, “Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—¹⁷ things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ (Col. 2:16-17).

6. So Jesus was gloriously unique in His Humanity and in His deity.

III. Jesus Was Gloriously Unique in His Singularity:

1. John said, “We beheld His glory; glory as of *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*”

2. “Only Begotten here means “unique” or “without equal”, “single in kind,” or “matchless.” To be sure, there are other “children of God” (believers are called “children of God) but none are like *the* Son of God. The Logos (Word) is unique. He is the only One of His kind. He is “the only begotten from the Father.”

3. “Only Begotten” is an amazing title for Jesus. It means that He is the Son of God from all eternity. He is exalted above angels and prophets; He is called the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased; the only begotten Son; God’s own Son; the eternal Son; the one to whom the Father gave to have life in Himself; He is equal to the Father in knowledge, honor, creative and redemptive power, work, and dominion. (cf. Hendriksen; p. 87). Truly, there is none like Him.

4. Certainly there have been great religious leaders through history. There have been great teachers and preachers. The apostles were even able to perform miracles. But the reality is, they were nothing compared to Jesus. They were ministers of God’s grace and truth, but He is “full of grace and truth.”

5. Grace and Truth are the two attributes of Christ that are most closely associated with our salvation. How does a person get into right relationship with God? By believing the truth of the gospel and thereby receiving God’s saving grace. And both of the necessary commodities come to us through Christ. He is the fullest expression of God’s grace and the Personification of God’s truth.

6. Jesus is unique. There never was anyone like Him. If there was anyone during the lifetime of Jesus who might have been thought of as unique and great, it was John the Baptist. But look at verse 15 (Read 15).

7. The point is that Jesus even outranks John the Baptist. John himself testified to this. He wasn’t like other religious leaders trying to make a name for himself. No, he came to announce the greatness and glory of Jesus Christ.

8. John was a great man. In fact, Jesus himself said of John, (Matt. 11:11) "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist!" Even so, John knew that the glory of his life was but a spark in the night compared to the majestic glory of the sun that Jesus is. He is the Only Begotten from the Father full of grace and truth.

8. If you are a true child of God today, you know this to be true by experience. You know that there is something about Jesus that makes Him gloriously unique. How? By the fact that you have personally received from Him (16) "grace upon grace. (Read verse 16).

9. "From His fullness..." This is a really important statement. What is John referring to when he speaks of Jesus' "fullness"? Paul tells us in Col. 2:9 that "In Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." In other words, Jesus' "fullness" is His "Godness."

10. When John speaks of Jesus' "fullness" he speaks of an everlasting reservoir of supply. There is not a person in this room who isn't familiar with having need. There are times when we are hungry and thirsty and in need of food and drink. There are times when the money runs out and we worry about how we will pay the bills. There are occasions when we are at odds with people we love and feel the need for reconciliation. We get confused about the complexities of life and need wisdom. When we sin we feel guilt and the need for cleansing.

11. All of these needs tend to expose the fact that none of us is self-sufficient. None of us can meet all of our own needs. We don't have the capacity to fill ourselves. Everything we have has been given to us by another and we tend to use it up as quickly as we receive it. But this isn't true of Jesus. He is a limitless supply.

12. Consider how "full" Christ must be. John says "we have all received" from His fullness. Every child of God has gone to Jesus to receive the grace He needs both for salvation and for every daily need, and yet Christ is just as "full" now as He ever was before.

13. Spurgeon writes, "We are accustomed to say that if a child takes a cupful from the sea it is just as full as before, but that is not literally true—there must be just so much less water in the ocean. But it *is* literally true of Christ, that when we have not only taken out cups full - for our needs are too great to be satisfied with such small quantities - when we have taken out *oceans* full of Divine grace - and we need as much as that to carry us to heaven - there is actually as much left. Although we each have drawn upon the treasure of His love to an extent so boundless that we cannot understand it, yet there is as much mercy and Divine grace left in Christ as there was before. And it is a "fullness" still, after all the saints have received it" from *The Fullness of Jesus the Treasury of Saints*, Sermon # 858 John 1:16).

14. The story is told of a time when Spurgeon, who was riding home one evening after a heavy day's work, was feeling weary and depressed. As he rode, the verse came to mind, "My grace is sufficient for you." In his mind he immediately compared himself to a little fish in the Thames River, apprehensive lest by drinking so many pints of water in the river each day he might drink the Thames dry. Then Father Thames says to him, "Drink away, little fish. My stream is sufficient for you. Next he thought of a little mouse in the granaries of Egypt, afraid lest its daily nibbles might exhaust the supplies and cause it to starve to death. Then Joseph comes along and says, "Cheer up, little mouse. My granaries are sufficient for you." Then he thought of a man

climbing some high mountain to reach its lofty summit and dreading lest his breathing might exhaust all the oxygen in the atmosphere. The Creator booms His voice out of heaven, saying, "Breathe away, oh man, and fill your lungs. My atmosphere is sufficient for you!" (from John MacArthur's *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, p. 256-257).

15. So it is with the grace of Christ. There is always infinitely more than enough to be found in Him. Why is it then, that when we are perplexed and troubled we run to everyone but Him? Why is it when it seems our resources have run dry and we have no means to meet the need that we fret and scheme without first running to Him. Why is it that when we become fearful about the future and depressed about the present that we dig for ourselves broken cisterns rather than running to the fountain of living water? His fullness is an ever-flowing river that never runs dry. And from Him we receive "grace upon grace."

16. William Hendriksen explains that the meaning of this verse is that believers are constantly receiving grace in the place of grace. One manifestation of the unmerited favor of God in Christ is hardly gone when another one arrives; hence *grace upon grace*. It is an incessant supply of grace that wells up from His "fullness." He is a limitless reservoir of grace

17. The law of Moses could never be that for us. (Read v. 17). The 10 Commandments and the rest of the Mosaic law were a wonderful gift of God. It served to expose our sin and reveal our need of a Savior. But there were two things the law could not supply: It couldn't supply *grace* so that sinners could be pardoned and helped in time of need, and it couldn't supply *truth* about how we are to be reconciled to God. Christ, by His atoning work, furnished both. He *merited grace* and personified *truth*.

18. By the way, this verse is the first time in the gospel that John actually mentions Jesus by name. He began by speaking about the Logos (Word) which created and sustains all things; which is the source of life and light. He reveals that this Logos came to earth and shined light upon every man; that when He came His the world and even His own people rejected Him. Nevertheless, those who received Him become Children of God. Then John makes the astounding statement that this Logos actually became flesh and lived on earth. He was greater than John the Baptist. He is the inexhaustible fountain of grace and truth; and finally that His name is Jesus Christ,

19. This is what John has been driving at the whole time. And to cap it off with a summary conclusion, John says, (Read v. 18).

20. The phrase, "Who is in the bosom of the Father" literally means "*who lies upon the Father's breast*." John intended to indicate a relationship of abiding closeness between God the Father and God the Son. Jesus had for all eternity been "in the bosom of the Father." For a short time He willingly left that place of honor and privilege to pitch His tent with us. But not that His work of redemption is done, he has returned to "the bosom of the Father."

21. When he was here on earth, Jesus "explained God". In other words, He is the answer to the question, "What is God like?" Do you want to know what god is like? You need look no further than to Jesus Christ.

22. Beloved, all of this should drive us to worship Him. All of it explains why Jesus is a worthy

object of our faith and hope. It explains how John can say that by believing in Him you will have life in His name.

23. In another month or so we will celebrate together the incarnation of the Son of God at Christmas. But we don't need to wait until then. Every day of our lives we receive grace upon grace. So every day is a perfect day to worship Him.

BI: The mystery and glory of the incarnation of Christ should drive our souls to wonder, awe and praise.