



The Eternal Preeminence of Jesus

Part 1 Jesus the Word of God

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Jesus Christ; The Son of God; The Eternal God; The Alpha; The Omega; The First; The Last; The Anointed One; King of Glory; The I Am; One with the Father; The Spotless Lamb of God. Basically, Jesus is the reason for our entire existence:

*"All things were created **through Him and for Him.**"* Colossians 1:16

Preeminence is a big word. It simply means to be first and foremost. In the case of Jesus Christ, it means that He is first in *all* things (see Col 1:18). You and I were created through Him and for Him. John 1 says that *"without Him nothing was made that was made."* Do we realize that all of "this:" our life, this world, from the birds of the air, to the particles of matter floating in space is all *for* Jesus? It is all about Him. We were created for His pleasure and for His delight. And although Father God and Holy Spirit get to enjoy us, the truth remains that it is all *for* Jesus.

In our journey into understanding the person of Jesus Christ I would like to start where the Apostle John started, *"In the beginning was the Word."* Jesus is the Word of God. When Father God speaks, the words that He speaks literally are the person of Jesus. Every word that God has ever spoken has revealed Jesus in deeper ways. Which brings me to the main point of this teaching: The Word of God is *not* the Bible. The Word of God is Jesus.

I would like accomplish two main goals in this teaching: One, remove a misplaced Christian mindset, and two, place that mindset in its proper place, while all the time while focusing on the Eternal Preeminence of Jesus. This misplaced viewpoint has caused us to elevate this object to a place bordering an idol in our lives. This object is non-other than the Holy Bible itself.

Hold on. Take a breath and let me give a disclaimer:

I am not against the Bible, nor do I think it is wrong or bad. I love the Bible and believe with all my heart that God has given it to us. It is perfect in it's revelation of God, and if used correctly it is a blessing to us.

There, having said that, lets continue. Remember, the first goal that I want to accomplish is removing a wrong mindset concerning the Bible. If you can stick with me through this first part, the second part has redemptive value and gives the Bibles its rightful, biblical role.

The Bible is only a book. God is not a book. Jesus is not a book. Yet, many people today have elevated this black and white script to be the final authority of Christian faith. They place it in their "Statement of Faith," declaring that the Bible is the final authority in all matters and that it is the Word of God. People place so much value on it that they will split families and churches because of what is written within it. Bible verses are used to condemn, scare, and shame people. Church bodies have been split, wars have been fought, and heart wounds been made, because of the wrong understanding of the purpose of the Bible. People even say, "Well, the Bible tells us to, therefore we must do it." Well, no we don't.

I was visiting a church one Sunday. This church is part of a denomination that idolizes the Scriptures to an unhealthy extreme. The people there were very friendly and I got into a conversation with this certain person, we will call him James. James and his wife had joined this particular church about a year earlier and within that year he and his wife had divorced. I conveyed my condolences, but he seemed unscathed by his divorce. Out of curiosity I asked him why the divorce occurred. The answer made my stomach turn.

James told me that when they started attending this church they were taught that this certain version of the Bible was the *only* true version. And that if they read out of any other version, they were being deceived. James readily agreed with this church's view concerning the "only true version" of the Bible, yet his wife disagreed and said that God could speak to them through any version of the Bible. This argument became the breaking point of their marriage. And James went on to tell me that he was happy that he and his wife divorced, because he couldn't have been union with someone with such "wrong theology." The church had supported this man, because he stood up for the truth.

Like I said, it is sickening. It turned my stomach. A righteous anger was kindled in me when I heard that testimony. I know that most of you reading this teaching would never agree with James or that churches perspective, or at the least you wouldn't take it as far as James, and allow it to ruin your marriage. Yet, so many of us still live life like James, in many areas of our lives—the Bible is the final say on all matters. When the Bible becomes our foundation we end up directing life because of the Scriptures: We eat certain things, because the Bible tells us too, we act a certain way because the Bible commands us to. That right there is Old Testament thinking and living.

The Old Testament speaks very highly of itself. It says that it is the end all of end alls. It says that we are to obey it in everything and to live our lives according to it.

Yet, we are New Testament believers, called into a greater realm of living. Did you know that as New Testament believers we are not called to live according to what the Bible says? It's true. Jesus came and gave a greater way—Himself. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is our standard and our model. And no I am not talking about reading in the Bible about how Jesus lived and copying him. I am talking about living from the revelation of the resurrected Christ. I am talking about living life according to the Spirit who is ever conforming us into the image of Jesus. We *are* called to live according to the Word of God—Jesus. Not according to what is written in a book, but by that which is revealed to us by the Spirit of God.

Our lives are to be lived from the truth that we are born-again into the image of Jesus. And from that born-again spirit we are enabled to live exactly like Jesus. We grow in to His likeness not because we read a command in the Bible and attempt to live it out, but because we see Jesus and are conformed into His image (see Col 3:10).

That brings us to the second part of this teaching: The Bibles rightful place.

Here is a scripture concerning the scriptures, spoken by the Word of God.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." John 5:39-40

This verse is one of my favorites. It gives us the clearest understanding of the purpose of the Scriptures: They testify of Jesus. Every word, story, and symbol is a revelation of Jesus. The Bible is one big book that is intended to show us Jesus, the Word of God. Jesus is the perfect representation of God (see Col 1:19). Pastor Bill Johnson, author of *When Heaven Invades Earth*, says, "Jesus is perfect theology." That is one of the purest statements of faith that there is. Jesus is where our theology must come from. And Jesus is revealed by the Spirit of God (see John 14-16).

The Holy Spirit can and will reveal Jesus through the Bible! The Bible is a pure source of truth. It contains untainted revelations of Jesus. By all means, read and memorize the Bible. Speak it, meditate on it, and quote it. This is why God gave us (New Testament believers) the Scriptures. But understand that when the Bible is read so that we can obey it as if it were our source of life, it will only kill us (see 2 Cor 3:6). Yet, when we read the Bible to learn about who Jesus is and we allow the Spirit of God to teach our hearts concerning Jesus, we receive life. It is only through the Spirit of God that life can be given.

While I was in a school of ministry, I took a class on Hermeneutics, which is the study on how to study the Bible. I learned the four main points on interpreting the Bible and how to properly exegete portions of Scriptures, yet every day I took that class the Holy Spirit would have a class of His own within my heart. While the instructor was speaking on the steps of properly interpreting the Bible, the Spirit was teaching me how to *receive* Jesus from the Bible. The irony of it was, that by the end of the class on how important the Bible was, and how to “properly” use it (all of which I agreed with), I had come to understand how little I needed the written word, and how much I needed the Holy Spirit revealing to me the Eternal Word.

The Holy Spirit gave me a mental picture while I was sitting in that particular class one day. He showed me Jesus on one end, the Bible in the middle, and me on the other end. He then proceeded to slowly make the Bible become transparent to where I was no longer looking at the Book, but now I was looking *through* the Book at Jesus. After I saw this vision unfold, the Spirit took it one step further. He made the Bible completely disappear so that I was now only looking at Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith. Winston Davenport, one of the strongest men of faith that I know and one of my closest friends, says, “If every Bible in the world suddenly was to disappear, our relationship with God should not be affected.” Why? Because, the Holy Spirit is the link between Jesus and us. The Bible is not.

The sad truth is that if all the Bibles in the world were to vanish the majority of Christians would be hindered in faith, and their relationship with God would be affected. So many people have faith because the Bible says it, but our faith needs to come from us personally hearing from God (see Rom 10:10). This is the New Testament way of living: personal relationship with Jesus, not based in black and white ink.

I am **not** saying that the Bible is worthless. It is absolutely priceless. It is the greatest Book in the world. But we don’t have relationship with a book. *The highest function of the Bible is to bring us into an encounter with Jesus Christ.* God intended for us to read the Scriptures and because of them, be plunged into relationship with Himself. The problem of this “sacred cow of Christianity” is that we have equated our heavenly relationship with our reading and memorizing of the Bible. And instead of being led by the Spirit and the revelation of Jesus, we are being led by the Bible.

As a good Christian I would always bring my Bible to my quiet times. But for a long season of my life, Jesus would tell me not to open it during my personal time with Him. I would go to open my Bible (because that is what you “do” in your quiet times with God) and He would tell me to close it and come before Him. He called me to receive directly from Him. For me, opening my Bible and reading it had become a religious duty that actually was hindering me from receiving from Him. In my mind I was being a “good Christian” by reading my Bible, but to God I was acting in religious duty, and not having a real relationship with Him.

This experience of mine was similar to what Paul spoke of in Galatians 1:11-16. Paul was thoroughly trained as an expert in “the Bible.” He knew the Scriptures inside and out. Yet, He did not preach according to the Scriptures. Yes, He often quoted the Scriptures to back up his message, but Paul’s Gospel did not come from the Bible. Where did they come from, you ask? The person of Jesus. Read Galatians 1:11-16:

*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. **For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, **to reveal His Son in me**, that I might **preach Him** among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.*

Notice, that Paul didn’t attribute the knowledge of his Gospel to having learned it from man. Not even the apostles. His undefiled Gospel came from the revelation of Jesus Christ. Let me repeat, Paul’s truth came from the revelation of the preeminence of Jesus Christ, and not the Scriptures of God nor the teachings from man. The Scriptures supported His revelation, and I am sure that the Holy Spirit used Paul’s knowledge of the Scriptures to bring revelation of Jesus. But Paul didn’t believe because the Scriptures said so, he believed because the Spirit had personally taught him.

In closing I would like to recap. Jesus is the Word of God. Without Him nothing was made nor has its existence. Everything is about Him and for Him. He must be preeminent in everything. The Bible is not the final authority on matters, Jesus is. The Bible is a God given, divinely inspired book, which purpose is to reveal to us the person of Jesus, and lead us into a real relationship with God. The Bible is not the foundation of our faith. The revelation of Jesus is the foundation of our faith. That revelation comes from the Holy Spirit. He can use and often does use the Bible to reveal to us Jesus. But He is not limited to teaching us through black and white print.

The Bible is a good thing. Praise God for it. But it must be put into proper perspective in our lives. We don't live according to what is written in it, just because it says for us to. We have to live according to the Spirit of God, who will enable us to live like Christ, and in so doing we will end up fulfilling the commands of the Scriptures. There is a big difference between two types of living. One will bring you into the bondage of the law and you will live like Old Testament believers, while the other one will empower you to live like Jesus Christ in every way, and you will be enabled to truly live righteously.

I pray that the words here will instruct your heart about *The Eternal Preeminence of Jesus*.