

We Would See Jesus: The Son of God

“Hear Ye Him”

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Jesus came to the area where John was baptizing. John very humbly baptized the Lord, understanding fully that this was “...to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). [All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.] When Jesus came up out of the water, the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove, “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (Matt. 3:17).

His baptism came at the beginning of the Lord’s ministry. The event of the transfiguration came near the end of His ministry on earth (Matt. 17:22). Jesus was about to be betrayed and put to death.

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly

afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. (Matt. 17:1-13)

There had been a change between the time of Jesus' baptism and the approach of the end of His ministry. That change was the near completion of all He had come to do. The transfiguration was a clear indication of God's pleasure in Him and the verification of His full authority. This is also stated just before Jesus ascended into heaven in the famous Great Commission: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). Paul later wrote, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name..." (Phil. 2:9). Jesus, by His life, proved that He was God and that He had all authority in all matters.

John wrote in the prelude to his gospel account, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has now come into being..." (John 1:1-3, NASB). When we are trying to get to the bottom of a thing we say, "What is the

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word?" on that subject. In the "Millionaire" game they ask, "Is that your final answer?" Jesus is the final answer and the authoritative "Word" for everything that we need upon this earth and beyond. In this lesson, we will observe the revelation of Jesus' authority, the reaction to His authority and the proper response to His authority.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS' AUTHORITY

Jesus' authority was revealed completely and understandably during His time on this earth. While the leaders of Israel rejected Jesus, there was no excuse for them to do so. When Paul made his defense before Agrippa, he said, "For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26-27). The apostles referenced Jesus' exceptional conduct in their sermon on the Day of Pentecost when they said, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know..." (Acts 2:22). As we look back, we too should be impressed with the establishment of the authority of Christ, and we too should listen to Him.

His Birth

From the very beginning of the life of Jesus one can observe His authority. His birth was accompanied by announcements from angels (Luke 2:8-14), a star appearing that would guide the Magi to the house where He was staying almost two years later (Matt. 2:2), the paranoia of an evil king (Matt. 2:16-18), and the proclamation of Simeon and Anna in the temple declaring Him to be the

promised Messiah (Luke 2:25-38). All of this reveals that Jesus was someone extraordinary.

His Temptation

Immediately following His baptism by John, Jesus faces the direct temptation of Satan. His unyielding stand against the tempter says much about His command of Scripture and His understanding of who He was. Satan left Jesus after this direct attempt on His credibility. He could not compete with His authority. The writer of Hebrews stated, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

His Teaching

The teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount was also a revealing of His authority. Jesus said eight times in Matthew 5, "But I say unto you" or "I tell you." If Jesus had no authority, this would have been a misleading statement. However, being the Son of God, Jesus was here correcting the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees and was clarifying the real intention of the Mosaic law. Matthew records for us, "And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29). The people could easily tell the difference between what Jesus said and what the scribes had taught. Luke added that the people said, "What a word this is!" (Luke 4:36). Jesus was impressive because He was and is the source of truth.

His Miracles

Immediately following the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus performed a rapid succession of miracles. These miracles proved His authority over disease—including the leper (Matt. 8:2-4), the centurion's servant (8:5-13), Peter's mother-in-law (8:14-15), and all others who were brought to Him (8:16). Jesus' authority over nature was revealed when He rebuked the wind and waves on Galilee to save the disciples (8:23-27). He also possessed power over demons. Jesus cast the demons out of two possessed men in the country of the Gadarenes. His power over them was so complete that they begged Him to cast them into a herd of swine and were apparently destroyed as the pigs ran into the sea (Matt. 8:28-34).

His Power Over Sin

While the healing of the paralytic could be placed under the heading of miracles, the manner in which Jesus healed the man is unusual. Mark's account records, "Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you'" (Mark 2:3-5). Jesus had power over the man's sins. Jesus can forgive a person's transgressions. Of all of the authority Jesus has, this is the one in which we are most interested, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The greatest need of mankind is the spiritual healing of our souls by Jesus.

His Power Over Death

Finally, in Matthew's account, Jesus brought a young girl back to life.

While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples...When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him. But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went out into all that land. (Matt. 9:18-19, 23-26)

Not only do we need Christ's power over sin, but also His power to bring us back to life in the resurrection.

His Transfiguration

The event under consideration was intended to give God's stamp of approval to the ministry of Jesus and to the authority He carried. By the appearance of Moses and Elijah, who represented the Law and the Prophets, God revealed to Peter, James and John that Jesus was the ultimate authority. Jesus was the culmination of all God had revealed to this point and would influence everything from this time on. Moses and Elijah not only represented the Law and Prophets, but "...the ending of all three lives was unusual" (Roper 541). Moses was buried by God and no one knows where he is buried. Elijah did not die but was carried away to heaven in a fiery chariot. They came to discuss the death Jesus was about to die. What better comforters could God have selected? "All three had known the trials of leadership" (Roper 541) and the impact

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of what Jesus was about to do. No better advisors could have been found in heaven.

When Peter blurted out his willingness to build three booths, the cloud overshadowed them, the voice from heaven spoke, Jesus' face and clothing revealed God's glorification of Him, and then Jesus stood alone with them. This clearly signaled that Jesus was "the" only authority to whom they were to listen. The authority of Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, paled in comparison.

With all of this power, combined with His teaching and all of the declarations made about Him by all those around His life, how could anyone reject Jesus as the Son of God and refuse to listen to Him? It boggles the mind, yet we are no better. In spite of all the written record, all the insurmountable evidence, our world lies in wickedness and despair without Jesus. We must share this message with the whole world.

THE REACTIONS TO JESUS' AUTHORITY

Having all authority is one thing, however, Christ's authority is over men, and if men do not accept, respect and respond to His authority, their lives are in danger. Many a nation has been laid ruin for a lack of respect for the authority of both the Father and the Son.

The first record of a positive response to the authority of Jesus is after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). The closing words of this account state for us again, "And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching..." (Matt. 7:28). The multitudes could easily hear the difference between what Christ was saying and the leaders of their community. By understanding that Jesus could heal his servant without coming to his house, the centurion

honored Jesus' authority (Matt. 8:5-13). The disciples who followed Jesus throughout His ministry, though perhaps naïve as to the extent of Christ's authority, nevertheless respected what He had revealed to them. Peter's answer to Jesus on Mount Hermon, saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), is a good indication of this. Paul also fell under the power of Jesus' authority on the road to Damascus. He "...heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'" (Acts 9:4). Upon hearing and seeing Jesus in this vision, Saul realized his mistake in rejecting Jesus and became a Christian and an apostle. Hearing Jesus carries the ultimate authority.

However, not all responded to Jesus in this way. "The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him" (John 7:32). Even this backfired on the Pharisees. "Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, 'Why have you not brought Him?' The officers answered, 'No man ever spoke like this Man!'" (John 7:45-46). They envied Him, and in fact, this is stated as the reason they crucified Him, "For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy" (Matt. 27:18). After Jesus healed the lame man by the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, the Bible tells us, "For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath" (John 5:16-17). They never stopped to recognize that Jesus had authority over the man's infirmity; only that He had healed on the Sabbath, and the man was carrying his bed on the Sabbath (5:10).

At the cross, the same contrast between those who loved and were devoted to Jesus and those who hated Him continued. "Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him

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and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, 'Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?' And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him" (Luke 22:63-65). "And they all cried out at once, saying, 'Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas'" (Luke 23:18). "But they shouted, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!'" (Luke 23:21). "And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him" (Luke 23:27). "And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God'" (Luke 23:35). One of the most striking statements by the Jews during the examination of Jesus by Pilate is when they said, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). Little did they understand that the blood He was about to shed was for the remission of their sins. Some of these very same ones would probably be covered by that blood when they were baptized on the Day of Pentecost fifty days later. This is perhaps the greatest irony in all of Scripture. They rejected Jesus' authority, and yet that authority over all things was their only means of salvation.

At the time of the transfiguration, Peter had just six days earlier confessed correctly that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:15). How quickly he forgot, and we forget, that Jesus being the Son of God declares the authority He has over us. Peter honored Jesus here, but in just six days, he dishonored Him by equating Him with Moses and Elijah. The Law and the Prophets pointed to Christ and His gospel, but they were not equal to the new covenant. "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3:24-25).

OUR RESPONSE TO CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

While we may judge Peter harshly for his improper response when he saw Moses and Elijah with Jesus, we probably would have fared no better. By our unwillingness to allow Jesus the complete headship over our lives, we often reveal that we consider others or things equal to Jesus. Careers, lust for money and power, and the quest for leisure are examples of things we often put on a par with Christ.

Peter was overwhelmed in this situation. The Bible reveals that the disciples were heavy with sleep (Luke 9:32). After the statement by God, saying, "Hear Him," Matthew records that Peter, James and John "...were greatly afraid" (Matt. 17:6). The Bible also says that Peter did not know what he was saying (Luke 9:33). God took care of the problem by sending a bright cloud to overshadow them, and when it lifted, there was no one standing there but Jesus. There is no one but Jesus who has all authority over our lives, and all other things must be relegated to inferior positions once Christ has been made the Lord of our lives.

The Bible is resplendent with reasons why we should respond to the authority of Christ positively.

Because God Said So

God's statement, both at the baptism of Jesus and the Mount of Transfiguration, establishes that Jesus is God's Son. These two statements alone should be enough to convince us to listen to Him and obey Him.

Because of Eyewitnesses

Peter himself later recounted for us:

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables
when we made known to you the power and

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coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:16-21)

None of the disciples' peers could reject the eyewitness accounts during the first century when the facts were readily available. John began his gospel account by saying, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). How much more should we be willing to now accept what they testified in Scripture!

Because of Inferior Alternatives

What plausible alternative source of salvation can be offered? Mohammed offers hate, death and destruction. Judaism clings to antiquated law that was never intended to last. Buddhism and Confucianism pass off simple human wisdom as the means to life after this life. Hinduism offers only reincarnation, which is a system of diminishing returns. Humanism offers nothing beyond this life and is a fatalistic concept along with atheism (humanism being the religion of the atheist). Money is

fleeting at best and power can be taken away. None of these offer what Jesus offers.

Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). This statement was not made in a context of Jesus bullying the disciples into following Him but was stated with love and hope for eternal life. Jesus wanted them to know the way. Jesus provided the blood sacrifice by giving Himself on the cross. He presided over the proceedings of that sacrifice being our High Priest. He also rose from the dead, thus making that sacrifice ongoing. No other alternative exists, nor should we seek one. The writer of Hebrews said it best;

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. (Heb 10:1-4)

Because of His Word

God is not revealing anything new today, but the word which was written continues to be authoritative today. It does not grow old or antiquated but is as fresh as the day the Holy Spirit inspired it.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who

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being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." (Heb. 1:1-6)

Many are making a mockery of the Bible today due to their rejection of it as relevant. The new "emergent movement" states, "The bible is no longer a principal source of morality, functioning as a rulebook" (Percy 165). This means they do not believe the Bible is fully authoritative, so they don't follow it. This is a microcosm of the American culture today. When we understand the authoritative Word and the impact it is to have on our lives (2 Tim. 3:16-17), we will live better. Jude said, "Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries" (Jude 8).

Because of His Salvation

Peter and John, while under arrest by the Sanhedrin said, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). When God announced that Jesus is His Son and that we must "Hear Him," this means that He is the final authority on all matters, and especially with reference to salvation.

This means that we should listen to Jesus about faith, repentance, confession and baptism. He told Nicodemus, "...unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). There is no arguing with Jesus, for He has all authority in all matters. We must obey His voice. "Today, if you will hear His voice...There remains therefore a rest for the people of God" (Heb. 3:7; 4:9).

CONCLUSION

Like Peter, James and John, when the cloud lifts at the end of the day, the only One who will be standing there is Jesus. Other things we have done and other people we have followed in this life will count for nothing. What we have done with the voice of Jesus will mean everything.

Have we listened to the voice of God's Son? Have we obeyed His every command? Have we been His friend and loved Him by keeping His commands (John 14:15)? These will be the only important questions. Jesus alone is standing between us and heaven. He has given everything to get us to that special place. Will we "Hear Him"?

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