

Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord

John 5

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The purpose of the Gospel of John is to reveal the true Glory of Jesus Christ – the Word, made flesh (John 1:14). Chapter by chapter the picture of Jesus emerges. The goal is that by the end of this gospel we might come to full faith in Jesus and in so doing find life in His name. So far we have seen Jesus perform many miraculous signs. We have seen His heart and felt the force of His love and grace as well. But now, in chapter 5, things get even more intense. Here we are confronted with the full reality of who Jesus claims to be.

The Outrageous Claims of Christ

In John 5, the Jewish leaders are trying to find a way to kill Jesus. They are filled with rage for one primary reason: the outrageous claims of Jesus Christ. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, which made them angry to begin with (John 5:1-16)... but there was more. Jesus was making claims that made Him equal with God. For the Jewish leaders, this was the ultimate blasphemy and it sent them into a rage.

If Jesus had only claimed to be a teacher, prophet, religious reformer or a wise and loving guide to spiritual truth, things would have gone far differently. The religious leaders might have been irritated, argumentative, or threatened. Instead they went into a murderous rage. Jesus made Himself equal with God—that pushed them over the edge. Jesus put himself in a category all alone. He claimed to be more than a prophet, teacher or example. In fact, He claimed to be more than a man. He claimed for Himself the very authority and power of deity. The result was intense controversy and a separation between those who would believe and those who would reject the claims of Christ.

Today, the controversy is exactly the same... the claims of Christ seem just as outrageous as ever. People who really understand Christ's claim to deity know that this claim puts Jesus in a category all alone. He is not simply one religious teacher among many other religious teachers that have come through the ages. Jesus is unique. He is the Eternal Word—true God in human flesh. This is a radical claim! It means that Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God and the only Savior or the world. For many, this is an offensive idea. It was offensive to the Jewish leaders who first heard it and it has remained so right up until today. For those who put their faith in Jesus it is the most precious and important truth of all. It is this truth that convinces us that Jesus is truly able to save—completely worthy of our trust—fully deserving of our worship.

A Guide to the Deity of Christ in the Gospel of John

John is above all the Gospel of the Deity of Jesus Christ. Here are some passages that develop this idea: John 1:1-5 & 14-18; John 1:50-51 (for Son of Man see Daniel 7:13-14 & Mark 14:60-64); John 5:16-29 (note that Jesus does what only God does: He works with divine power and authority, gives life to the dead, raises people up for final judgment, judges at the final judgment); John 8:57-59 (Jesus call himself the "I AM" = God); John 10:30-31; John 12:40-41 (a reference to Isaiah 6 and the vision of the Sovereign Almighty God is here applied to Jesus); John 14:6; and the climax statement in the Gospel: John 20:27-31 in which Thomas confesses Jesus as Lord and God.

The True Confession of Christian Faith: "My Lord and My God"

The confession of Thomas in John 20:28 is the climax of everything in the Gospel. It is a statement of truth about Jesus of course. He is "Lord and He is God." But it is also a personal confession of faith. In fact, this is THE confession of faith that John is calling us to. It is a confession in which we personally embrace and affirm the outrageous claim of Christ about who He is. John teaches us what it means to say "Jesus is Lord." It's a claim about who Jesus truly is. It's not just the declaration of a personal preference among many other equally valid preferences. It is not like saying: "for me personally, Jesus is my Lord, but there are a lot of other valid options out there as far as "lords" go, so whatever you are into is cool." To say Jesus is Lord, according to the Gospel of John is to affirm that Jesus is God. In His incarnation He is uniquely the Son of God (God in human flesh). This is why His life is the unique and ultimate revelation to mankind. This is why His death on the Cross is the ultimate act—absolutely effective in purchasing the forgiveness of sins and the ultimate victory over death and evil. Everything in the Christian Faith hangs on this. This is precious beyond measure for those who believe, but it is also a matter of pointed controversy.... It was for Jesus during the days of His ministry on earth and it is for those

who call Jesus their Lord and God in our times as well. The Gospel of John teaches us to stay strong in our confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and God – no matter what!

For Further Study

Take some time to reflect on John chapter 5 this week. Read through the passages listed above about the deity of Christ in the Gospel of John. Ask God to speak to your heart about the truth of who Jesus is. Trust him. Worship him. Determine to stay strong in your view of Jesus Christ, even if it seems controversial to believe that Jesus is who He clearly claims to be.