

Hymns:        11 How Great Thou Art        38 Fairest Lord Jesus  
                 70 Praise Him! Praise Him!    91 Crown Him with Many Crowns  
                 67 Wonderful Words of Life

Scripture:     Psalm 8

Big Idea: Jesus the I AM

Back in the heyday of TV game shows, there was a long-running program named *To Tell the Truth*. It had many hosts and panelists, but my favorite was the game show king – Bill Cullen. Does that name ring a bell? Or how about the panelists: Tom Poston, Peggy Cass, Orson Bean (still living), and Kitty Carlisle?

Anyway, the game involved each panelist in turn asking a question of a member of the team of three players to sort out which one was **not** an impostor. The game started with each member of the team standing and saying for example “I am John Smith.” Who remembers that show?

Today’s study is not about the game show *To Tell the Truth*. But it is about probing into the **Truth** as we continue on our journey to understand the Bible by analyzing difficult sayings of Jesus. Jesus is the central figure of the Bible. It has been said, you can find Jesus on every page.

If we understand who He is,  
we can better understand what He says.

That takes us a long way down the road to knowing the **Truth**.

Today we will focus on how Jesus described Himself with just a few references to how others described Him. Our journey will lead us to **two words**. These two words – uttered alone by Jesus on **at least** two separate occasions -- evoked **indignant wrath** toward Him by the Jews and ultimately **sealed His fate**. Would anyone like to guess what those two words are?

Let’s get started:

John 1

[1] *In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was **with God**, and **the Word** was **God**.*

[14] *And the Word was made 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**. [There’s that word again, and we’ll see it more as we move along.]*

Today, we will see various characteristics of Jesus Christ. This first *the Word* can be viewed loosely as a *metaphor* but technically is a *metonymy* since it refers to one aspect of Jesus’ character. Notice that since Jesus is the Word of God, **every word** in the Bible is His word or as some say His-story. If you think of a red-letter edition of the Bible, it shows quotations of Jesus in red, but in reality, since the Bible is Jesus’ word, it would not be wrong to print every letter of the text in red.

So we see that:

- Jesus Christ (v.17) was the Word
- He was with God (the Father)
- He was God (one person of the Godhead)

Now let's stop here and observe a general point of interpretation. When we read the the New Testament, the Greek word for God is the-o's. This verse contains two different usages for the same word. In the first case, it refers to God the Father. In the second, it refers to the Godhead. Commonly, when we see the word *God* in the Bible, we immediately assume God the Father. That's not always the case. We need to be careful when we read the word *God* to discern from the context which meaning is intended.

Now, returning to John chapter one, we find a very familiar *metaphor* that John the Baptist used to describe Jesus. Do you remember that one?

*[29] The next day John s[aw] Jesus coming unto him, and sai[d], Behold the **Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

Clearly, Jesus was a man and not an animal. The animal reference to a sacrificial lamb indicates that Jesus came to earth to die as the perfect sacrifice. Calling Jesus a Lamb **is** a metaphor.

So with that introduction, let's look at what Jesus said about Himself. It's very interesting to note that these statements are found almost exclusively in the Gospel of John. John tells us why, as he plainly lays out his reasons for writing the book:

John 20

*[31] But these are written,  
that ye might believe that  
Jesus is **the Christ**,  
the **Son of God**;  
and that believing  
ye might have life through his name.*

Let's now quickly blast through the Gospel of John to pick up these metaphors and other words that Jesus used to describe himself. In John 3:24-25, Jesus tells the woman at the well that He is **the Messiah, the Christ**. Both words mean *anointed one* – referring to His kingship. There's that first reason the Apostle John gave. Unlike many today, the woman had no trouble accepting that.

Let's move on. Chapter 6 verses 35-51, Jesus said He was **the living bread, the bread of life**, that **came down from heaven** like manna. He said eating His flesh produced eternal life. As we learned in a prior message, He was talking figuratively and not literally. Still, **even today** most of Christendom fails to understand Jesus' difficult teaching here.

John 8

*[12] Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am **the light of the world**:*

*he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,  
but shall have the light of life.*

Of course, Jesus gave **spiritual** light in a spiritually dark world. The truth is, He and the Father will be the source of **physical** light as well in the future heavenly city called the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23).

In John 8:24, 28, Jesus tells the crowd that believing in Him is their only hope to escape condemnation for sin. He refers to Himself as the **Son of man** as described in Daniel 7:13-14 – the ruler of the glorious eternal kingdom.

In John 10:7-9, Jesus describes Himself as a **sheep gate** that leads to life and sustenance. Then He calls Himself the **good shepherd** who gives His life for his sheep (v.11). He said He knows each one by name and they know Him (v.14).

In verse 36 we learn the crowd picked up stones to stone Jesus; because they said He blasphemed by claiming to be the **Son of God**.

John 11

*[25] Jesus said unto [Martha the sister of Lazarus],  
I am  
the **resurrection**, and  
the **life**:  
he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

He is saying that He is the source of victory over the grave by producing life out of death.

In John 13:13, Jesus certifies His titles **Master** (or teacher) and **Lord** (as in lord of the household).

Then we come to a very familiar verse:

John 14

*[6] Jesus saith unto him, I am  
the **way**,  
the **truth**, and  
the **life**:  
no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

His way is the only way to eternal life and His words are true.

In John 15:1-5, Jesus calls Himself **the vine** connected to and enlivening the branches (believers).

In John 17:16 Jesus says that both He and His are **not of this world**. They are aliens. That is, their focus and citizenship are in heaven and not the earth.

And finally, in John 19:21 we learn that Jesus claimed to be **King of the Jews**.

So let's list them all at once. Jesus is:

1. the Word
2. eternal
3. God
4. the Lamb of God
5. the Christ or Messiah
6. the Son of God
7. the living bread or bread of life that came down from heaven
8. the light of the world
9. the sheep gate
10. the good shepherd
11. the resurrection
12. Master
13. Lord
14. the way
15. the truth
16. the life
17. not of this world
18. the King of the Jews

We can also add the following from other books of the Bible:

1. Wonderful (Isaiah 9:6)
2. Counselor
3. Mighty God
4. Prince of Peace
5. Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5)
6. King of Kings (Revelation 19:16)
7. Lord of Lords

With that, let's return to our question. You've had a few minutes to think about it. Would anyone like to guess now what two words sealed Jesus' fate? Here's a big hint:

Exodus 3

*[13] And Moses said unto God,  
Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel,  
and shall say unto them,  
The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you;  
and they shall say to me,  
What is his name?  
what shall I say unto them?  
[14] And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM:**  
and he said,  
Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,*

*I AM hath sent me unto you.*

When Jesus taught in the temple. He said the following:

John 8

[51] *Verily, verily, I say unto you,  
If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

[52] *Then said the Jews unto him,  
Now we **know** that thou hast a devil.  
Abraham is **dead**, and the prophets;  
and thou sayest,*

*If a man keep my saying,  
he shall never taste of death.*

[53] *Art thou **greater** than  
our father Abraham, which is **dead**?*

*Of course, He is far greater.  
and the prophets are **dead**:  
whom makest thou thyself?*

[54] *Jesus answered,  
If I honour myself, my honour is nothing:  
it is **my Father** that honoureth me;  
of whom ye say,  
that he is your God:*

[55] *Yet ye have not known him [that is, God the Father];  
but I know him:  
and if I should say, I know him not,  
I shall be a liar like unto you:  
but I know him, and keep his saying.*

Now Jesus drops another bomb on them:

[56] *Your father Abraham rejoiced to **see my day**:  
and he **saw it**,  
and was **glad**.*

Hebrews 11 explains that:

[13] *These [referring to Abraham and others]  
all died in faith,  
not having received the promises,  
but having seen them afar off,  
and were persuaded of them,  
and embraced them, ...*

[57] *Then said the Jews unto him,  
Thou art not yet fifty years old,  
and hast thou seen Abraham?*

We know from Genesis 17 and 18 that in fact He did.

God in the flesh visited Abraham.

Here comes the bunker-buster bomb:

[58] *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

Jesus was claiming to be God – the pre-existent one.  
The Jews understood what He was claiming.  
What did they do?

[59] *Then took they up stones to cast at him:  
but Jesus hid himself,  
and went out of the temple,  
going through the midst of them,  
and so passed by.*

He came to earth to die on a cross – not be stoned to death.  
This was not His hour.  
Let's now skip ahead to His hour and see how things differ.

Mark 14

[53] *And they led Jesus away to the high priest:  
and with him were assembled all the  
chief priests and  
the elders and  
the scribes.*

[55] *And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.*

[61] *... the high priest asked him, and said unto him,  
Art thou the Christ,  
the Son of the Blessed?  
[62] And Jesus said, I am:*

He just made that clear claim to deity, but for good measure He adds:

*and ye shall see the **Son of man** sitting on the right hand of power,  
and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

There's the reference to Daniel 7 and that pictures Him in glory as the eternal ruler.

[63] *Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith,  
What need we any further witnesses?  
[64] Ye have heard the blasphemy:*

*what think ye?  
And they **all** condemned him to be guilty of death.*

So the two words that sealed Jesus fate were **I am**.

Yet for some reason, the cults especially have a really tough time accepting that Jesus Christ is God. I heard on the radio long ago a little trick that stuck with me all of these years. The teacher said to identify cults by thinking of a four-function calculator:

1. They add to the word of God.
2. They subtract from Jesus Christ.
3. They multiply heresies.
4. They divide the church.

That second rule is very powerful.

In Matthew 22:41 Jesus posed the following question to the Pharisees:

*What think ye of Christ?*

That's a good question to keep in mind when the cults come a-knockin' on your door. Try to figure out how they **diminish** Jesus Christ. Usually, they lower Him from His position as a member of the triune godhead. A very wise teacher named Dr. Sam Smith gave me this little test to ask them. Just say who raised Jesus from the dead?

They will answer God. You can then drive them to specifics.

That is, God the Father? They will probably say "yes." Next you can confirm that with a Bible verse:

Galatians 1

*[1] Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and **God the Father, who raised him from the dead;**)*

Then you can ask who else? How about the Holy Spirit? This will likely get them squirming if they do not believe in the trinity:

Romans 8

*[11] But if **the Spirit** of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies **by his Spirit** that dwelleth in you.*

So we have Father, and Spirit. We can then finish it off with these verses:

John 2

*[19] Jesus ... said ..., Destroy **this temple**, and in three days **I will raise it up**.*

*[20] Then said the Jews,*

*Forty and six years was this temple in building,*

*and wilt thou rear it up in three days?  
[21] But he sp[oke] of **the temple of his body.***

Jesus is God. Not the Father and not the Spirit, but the Son. He is God every bit as much as the Father is or the Spirit is. This is difficult. But **if** we can grasp it and remember it, we will find we will have moved closer to understanding what Jesus says.

So you can see that Jesus as the God-Man provides the connection from the Godhead to the physical world. He created it; he holds it all together; and he keeps it running. He expressed Himself in all five of the senses:

- Sight – behold the Lamb of God
- Hearing – the Word of God spoke and continues to speak
- Taste – He is the bread of life
- Touch – He touched the blind man to heal Him. He washed the disciple's feet.
- Smell – He was anointed by precious ointment by Mary of Bethany.

### **Application**

What then do we do with this? That leads us back to that question.

What think ye of Christ? That really is the central question of life isn't it? In that fateful day when you meet your maker, will Jesus find you to be a true **believer** or an **impostor**? On that day, the **truth** will be known. The Good Shepherd knows the name of each of his sheep. We simply must choose Him:

Romans 10

*[9] ... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,  
and shalt believe in thine heart that **God hath raised him from the dead,**  
thou shalt be saved.*

I trust each of you have accepted His free gift of grace, you know Him, and are walking daily in his presence and in the light of His truth.

### **Benediction**

*Now the God of peace,  
that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,  
Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,  
working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight,  
through Jesus Christ;  
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.  
(Hebrews 13:20-21)*

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