

I. Jesus affirms His deity

A. As I stated at the beginning of our study of John, one of John's primary purposes in writing the gospel is to verify that Jesus is God in human flesh, that He is both human and divine, both man and God.

1. Here in John 5, beginning with vs 19 through the end of the chapter (vs 47), John records Jesus' own words regarding His being God in human flesh.
2. In vs 19-23, Jesus affirms His oneness with God by stating that He and God do exactly the same things, including healing on the Sabbath, raising the dead, and judging mankind – during this life and at the final judgment.
3. In vs 24, Jesus confirms His oneness with God by saying that believing in God and obeying Jesus results in eternal life.
4. In vs 25-30, Jesus shows His oneness with God by the fact that His voice will be heard as God's voice when the dead are called out of their tombs at the end of this world, and when they are separated – as the sheep are separated from the goats – in the final judgment.
5. In vs 31-32, Jesus says that He is not the only witness to the truth of who He is, God is also testifying to the truth of who Jesus is. This argument concerning their oneness is based on the fact that God states that it is by the mouth of two or three witnesses that the truth is confirmed. In this case, Jesus and God are the two witnesses.
6. In vs 33-35, Jesus says that John the Baptist's teachings confirm that Jesus and God are one.
7. In vs 36, Jesus says that in spite of how great John the Baptist's witness was, the works that Jesus has been doing are an even greater proof that He and God are one.
8. In vs 37-38, Jesus says that God, himself, declares that they are one. But Jesus goes on to say that they (*those He was talking to*) have never heard God say this and cannot hear God say this because they do not believe in Jesus – the one sent to them by God.
9. Jesus' final confirmation that He and God are one is found in vs 39-47. It is in these nine verses that Jesus tells them the OT scriptures, including those written by Moses, speak about Him as Immanuel, that is "God with us." However, even though they read the OT, and even though they teach others what Moses wrote and taught, they

themselves do not believe what Moses said about Jesus. And since they don't believe what Moses said about Jesus and God being one, there is no way they are going to believe Jesus' claim that He and God are one.

B. There is more to these verses than the summary just given, and it is my intention to work through each of these truths that Jesus presents to confirm He and God are one. However, before doing that, I want to give you four reasons why it is important to know and believe that Jesus and God are one.

1. I understand that most, if not all of us, accept this truth, so it isn't as if you need to be convinced that Jesus and God are one.
2. However, because it is important to our understanding of God and our faith in God to know and believe they are one, I am going to present four reasons why it is important.

C. Pray

II. Four reasons why it is important for us to know and believe that Jesus and God are one.

A. Reason One: The first reason it is important to know and believe that Jesus and God are one is because the God who decreed eternal damnation as the penalty for sin is the same God who came to earth, took on the likeness of man, and paid sin's penalty in order to give every sinner a second chance at life – provided we repent, trust in Jesus Christ for freedom from the penalty and power of sin, turn from our sinful ways, and go forward to live a righteous life that is pleasing to God.

1. In talking to His disciples, Jesus confirms His oneness with God when He said, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." [8] Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." [9] Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:7-9).
2. And Paul shows the link between the one who condemns and the one who saves in Galatians 1:3-4 . . . Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, (4) who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.
3. But why is it so important to know and believe that the same God who condemns sinners to eternal hell saves them from such an end?

- a. It is important because it gives us a balanced, and therefore more accurate view of God.
 - b. Too often God is condemned and rejected as being evil because He is seen from only one side – and that is the side of His condemnation of sinners and sending them into an eternity of damnation. It is this one-sided view that gives people the idea that God is calloused and unloving, as well as harsh and cruel.
 - c. However, when we look at both sides of God in relation to sin, we see that it is the condemning God who not only forgives sinners, He saves them from the penalty of their own sin by taking their place in paying that penalty on their behalf.
 - d. In other words, the God who condemns sinners to eternal hell put himself in a horrible, painful, unjust, and even unreasonable situation in order to make a way for sinners to have a second chance at a life, which begins here and now and continues on throughout eternity.
 - 4. Therefore, it is unfair and irrational to despise and reject God for refusing to approve or tolerate willful, deliberate, and continuous sin when He, himself, did what was required to make a way for willful sinners to repent, gain forgiveness, and receive the gift of eternal life.
 - 5. Now admittedly, proclaiming this truth is not a guaranteed way to bring sinners to their senses concerning the true character of God.
 - a. As it has been, so it will be that those who want to hate Him or despise Him, will, regardless of our best arguments.
 - b. However, we ought to give them this fuller, more balanced picture of God so they can, if they will, make a more informed decision about accepting and believing in and obeying God.
- B. Reason Two: The second reason it is important to know and believe that Jesus and God are one is that by coming to earth in human form and experiencing life in many of the same ways we experience it, God has shown that it is entirely possible to live a godly life in our sinful, selfish, unjust, difficult, and sometimes disappointing world.
- 1. Think about it this way –
 - a. God in Christ took on the limitations of humanity.
 - b. He endured the earthly elements – such as heat, cold, rain, drought, insects, and sickness.
 - c. He was born into poverty, had to flee His home country because the king wanted to kill Him, was raised in obscurity, and had to wait unto age 30 to begin the work God sent Him to do.

- d. He dealt with – on a daily basis – selfish, foolish, careless, thoughtless, arrogant, angry, dishonest, and even hostile people.
 - e. He experienced rejection, unfair criticism, public attacks on His character and intentions, and hostility from the religious community – a community who should have been the ones who supported and helped Him. Even His own disciples were, at times, disappointing, foolish, and difficult to deal with.
 - f. And Jesus faced false arrest, false accusations, a unjust trial, being condemned to death by a mob with the support of the Roman ruler in Jerusalem, torture, and death on a cross – ALL WITHOUT SINNING HIMSELF.
2. The writer of Hebrews put it this way, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).
3. Peter talked about Jesus being our example of holiness in the face of trials and suffering truth in 1 Peter 2:20-23 . . . For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. [21] For you have been called for this purpose (*to remain godly in the face of mistreatment*), since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, [22] Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; [23] and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.
4. So why is this second reason so important? Because too many Christians think they will always sin, or that they can’t help but sin.
- a. Jesus shows us that once we are born again, we no longer have to sin and that we can do what is necessary to keep from sinning.
 - b. Now assuredly, we must have God’s help and His empowerment to stop sinning and keep from sinning. But even with all that God has done and does to help us, it is likely we will be careless now and then, or occasionally give way to temptation in a particularly difficult situation, or grow tired of persevering and take a break from vigilantly guarding against temptation and sin.
 - c. However, it is not God who has failed, and it is not some evil force greater than God in us that has taken us over and made us sin. We are the ones who sinned, not because we had to, but because we wanted to, or because we didn’t want not to.

- d. God has done all that is necessary to enable us to say no to sin and yes to holiness. He has given us promises (*including never allowing us to be tempted beyond our current spiritual ability to resist*). He has given us a new nature, the Holy Spirit, inner power, the living Word, prayer, and the support of the church.
 - e. Therefore, we no longer have to sin, and Jesus shows us the proof of this by facing powerful and repeated temptations during His 33 years on the earth – yet without sin.
- C. Reason Three: The third reason it is important to know and believe that Jesus and God are one has to do with God and compassion, sympathy, and His ability to comfort us in the face of trials and tribulation.
 - 1. God, who knows all and is perfect in every way, has always been able to come along side us in our time of need and express compassion, or sympathize with our situation, or say the right things given our circumstances.
 - 2. However, because Jesus and God are one, He is not only able to show perfect compassion or sympathy because of His nature, God is able to show us compassion and sympathy that is a combination of His nature and His personal, human experiences.
 - a. In other words, God not only knows how to respond because of who He is.
 - b. He knows how to show compassion and sympathy because He has personally experienced pain, suffering, a broken heart, the difficulty of making sense of a situation or people's behavior, and the disappointment of not being able to gain the cooperation necessary to fix a damaged relationship or reconcile a broken one.
 - c. He knows how to show compassion and sympathy because He has faced what we face. He knows – by personal experience – our human weaknesses, and the power of our flesh to want its own way, and the cunning deceptiveness of the devil's temptations.
 - 3. The writer of Hebrews put it this way, "Therefore, [Jesus] had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17-18).
 - 4. The importance of this truth is that God, in Jesus Christ, has put Himself through what we go through so that He can show compassion and sympathize from both the perfections of his nature and from His

personal experience with trials and tribulation. May we find great comfort in knowing that God knows what we are facing and feeling.

D. Reason Four: The fourth reason it is important to know and believe that Jesus and God are one is that it gives us the ultimate reason to take seriously what Jesus says – as recorded for us in the four gospels. In other words, because Jesus is God in human flesh, His teachings ought to be held as having at least equal worth to any other writings in the OT and NT.

1. For example, most Christians agree that the ceremonial and sacrificial parts of the OT Law no longer apply to NT Christians. And most Christians worship on Sunday rather than obeying the third of the Ten Commandments.
 - a. However, there are those who discount all but the Proverbs, some Psalms, and the end times prophecies of the OT.
 - b. Another example within the larger, universal church is a group of believers – known as ultra-dispensationalists – who not only reject most of the OT – with the exception of end times prophecy – they claim that the four Gospels are only for Jews, and therefore not intended for NT Christians. They believe the church began in Acts 2, and therefore, only what was written after that time applies to NT Christians.
2. However, Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-19, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. [18] For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. [19] Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”
3. And once again we find that the writer of Hebrews is very helpful in understanding the importance of knowing and believing that Jesus and God are one, for we read in Hebrews 1:1-2 and 2:1-3.
 - a. Hebrews 1:1-2 . . . God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, [2] in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.
 - b. Hebrews 2:1-4 . . . For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. [2] For if the word spoken through angels proved

unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, [3] how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord [Jesus], it (*what Jesus taught*) was confirmed to us by those who heard, [4] God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

4. Now you may be thinking that none of this applies to you because you believe the OT is just as much the Word of God as the NT, and that the gospels matter just as much as the epistles.
5. Give me a moment to challenge that assumption. In my experience, it is all too common for modern day Christians to interpret the teachings of Jesus through the lens of Paul's epistles.
 - a. We especially see this where Christ's words do not support or are seen to contradict their interpretation of Paul's teachings on such topics as grace, salvation by faith alone, God's tolerant love for Christians who continue to knowingly sin, the place of the Law in the lives of NT Christians, and eternal security.
 - b. In other words, in spite of claiming to give equal weight to the teachings of Jesus and the writings of Paul, we face the temptation to hold Paul's teachings as superior to Christ's teachings – because so many around us do it. In other words, if we are not careful, we too might read the gospels in light of the epistles, rather than read them both as equals.
6. So what is my point? The very fact that Jesus and God are one is reason enough to treat the teachings of Christ as at least equal to the writings of Paul and the other NT epistles. You see, it is the unified NT that gives us the most complete picture possible of who God is, what He is like, how we are to respond to Him and His gift of eternal life, and what He expects from us once we become His child.

III. Conclusion

- A. I want to conclude with Jesus' own words from John 5:23b, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."