

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> of James 1:1 'Lord! Jesus! And Christ!'

Last time we began our series of studies on the book of James, and basically we only looked at the first three words: "James a dolos," a slave, a bond servant! But before we even came to the text, we did a lot of looking at the man who wrote the letter, and why he wrote it. Because as I explained, with any letter, two things are all important to know. The purpose of the writing of the letter, and also knowing the person who wrote it! And so we went I guess, in search James the man who wrote this letter. And with John Blanchard and most modern commentators I said, that it was not James the brother of John, or James the son of Alphaeus the apostle. But James, the second son born to Mary, Jesus' brother!

And this being the case, the opening to this letter "James a dolos," a slave, is all the more striking. But as we saw, that is not who James started out to be. John 7:1-5 "Go up to Judea Jesus and show yourself to the whole world." v5 of John 7 "For even his own brothers did not believe in him." But their contempt was far worse. When Jesus entered some house and a commotion ensued in Mark 3:21, "They wanted to take charge of him, for they said, "He's out of his mind." Yes *exteser*. He's beside himself. He's possessed. And the high-and-mighties of the day confirm this in v22 "By the Prince of demons he is driving out demons.'

So although half-brother to the Lord Himself, (even born from the same mother's womb) Jesus, brothers and sisters needed to be saved! Yes we must each one of us come to the cross ourselves. We are not saved by association. Whether that be Christian parents, Christian family or Christian friends. We must all come to the Cross on our own!

Saved after the resurrection, James became a prominent figure in the church at Jerusalem. Bishop, Pastor, Ruling elder, head of the council at Jerusalem. Even first brother of the Lord Himself. And yet he only saw himself as Christ's slave! Yes he had been brought to understand who he was, how he got there and to whom it was that he belonged. To whom it was that he was indebted. Because that's what a slave is: someone who is owned and in debt to another. And even though he had all the connections and all of the positions, he calls himself a slave, because he had been brought to understand that he owed it all to Jesus! And in Acts 15, the heart of the Pastor is revealed. So the basis of the letter, is James' love, care and concern for the church and its unity!

And so we pick up the text again in James 1:1 under the heading, 'Lord! Jesus! And Christ!' And we read: "James a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ." So after soberly considering himself lowly, (and in so doing guiding us to do the same) James now exalts the Lord Jesus to the very throne, even the very right hand of God! "James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Listen to Philippians 2:5-11: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ. Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Beloved, there is an epidemic which is infecting many Christian circles today. It is an evil familiarity which pervades much of Christendom! Both Paul and James place a vast distance between themselves and Jesus, when in effect comparing themselves to Him. Paul called himself "the chief of

sinner” after decades of suffering, and serving the Lord. Whereas James refers to himself as “a slave”.

A. W. Tozer explains, that were we to take the lowest form of life, (whatever that may be) and then compare it to the highest form of life, say the Archangel Gabriel for example, though the distance between the two be vast, it would still be measurable, because both are part of God's created order. Yet were we to compare the Archangel Gabriel to Jesus, that distance would be immeasurable, because one is finite, and the other is infinite. Yes, one is the creation, while the other is the Creator!

Friends I've mentioned this before, that things such as “the fear of the Lord” and reverence, seem to be notions of the past. In many Christian circles today *God is my mate*. There are even people today asserting that they actually instruct God. That they converse with Him, in a back and forth conversation, as they would with anyone else. And that we are even of the same substance as our Creator. Indeed, as God spoke the universe into being, we too can speak our future into becoming reality. But friends whenever such falsehood, such heresy, such blasphemy is spoken or conveyed by any other means, two things must always occur. Firstly, God is brought down from His throne, and secondly, man is raised up to be seated upon it! And yet Paul said, “Christ must increase and I must decrease.” There can only ever be one person upon the throne of our lives. Either it will be Jesus or ourselves. It can never be both. Try as we might to make it happen, it will never work. Because God says. “I will not yield my glory to another.”

Do you know, that there are those in supposed Christian circles, who actually refer to themselves as God? One of them recently was boasting to his devotees that he was a billionaire. Not a millionaire but a billionaire. And he did this, as he was almost bullying his listeners into sending in their tithes, for the poor of course! But no, such things have nothing to do with Jesus. No it's all lies. And hell is waiting for each one of these demoniacs. There is no doubt they are children of the devil! Yes “James a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Notice that not only is James “a servant of God,” but equally so “of the Lord Jesus Christ.” As Peter Marshall so wonderfully explained when preaching on John 1:1-14, Jesus is eternal. Jesus is Creator. And Jesus is God! Not as some say that God is portraying Himself in three different ways, no. But Jesus being equally with, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, and Him being equal with God. Indeed being God Himself!

Brothers and sisters, it is easy to fall into the habit I guess, of having these words roll off our tongues, without ever really thinking of the implications of these three titles that are often given to Jesus. First of all James calls Him Lord! It is the Greek word *Kurios*. Blanchard explains that it occurs in the Greek translation of the Old Testament the Septuagint, over 9000 times. And most of these references point to God, the Sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe! And in the New Testament, it is in around 700 places. Sometimes it conveys a position of honour, other times it is one of respect, as from a son to his father. But the bulk of these times, (and always when referring to Jesus) it speaks of that same Sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe. We sing it don't we? *'Jesus is Lord, creation's voice proclaims it. For by His power each tree and flower was planned and made. Jesus is Lord the universe declares it, sun moon and stars in heaven cry Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord. Praise Him with hallelujahs for Jesus is Lord!'*

Yes when James calls Jesus Lord, he is attributing to Jesus, all of those eternal attributes and qualities that belong to God alone. No he leaves us in no doubt as to who Jesus is. Even as the Lord Himself said. “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” And also, “I and the Father are one.” One in essence. One in substance. One in eternal existence. “Of one mind, being with the Father” the scripture says. And it's interesting that it was after Jesus said this in John 10:30 that “I and the Father are one.” That “they picked up stones to kill him.” They knew exactly who He was claiming to

be. Yes, firstly James calls Jesus Lord, even God Almighty! And of course our Lord is called Jesus by James, because that is His Name. And his name means, the Lord is salvation. In Matthew 1:18-23 we read "this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet. 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel which means, God with us.'"

The commentator also explains, that in the name Jesus, both the incarnation of God becoming man, and His office as Saviour as He points us to the cross and His crucifixion, are clearly implied. How would Jesus save his people? Well of course, upon that emblem of suffering and shame, that Jesus Himself pointed them toward, time and time and time again. He said in John 3:14-15 "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert so the Son of Man must be lifted up that everyone that believes in him may have eternal life." And John 8:28 "So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claimed to be and I do nothing in my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.'" And finally, John 12:31-32 "Now is the time for the judgement on this world, now the Prince of this world will be driven out. But I when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

Friends, in each of these passages, Jesus is referring to that incident in the Old Testament when in Numbers chapter 21, the people grumbled and whinged as was their habit, (as so too it can often be with ourselves) yes they whinged and complained against God and Moses for just about everything. *Why did we ever leave Egypt? We are sick of this rotten food this manna. Why did you bring us out into the desert to die? Were there no graves in Egypt?* So in His judgement, God sent venomous snakes among them and many were bitten and died. But then the people came running to Moses crying out, *'O Moses we have sinned, please get God to take away the snakes so that we don't die.'* Well, Moses petitions God, and He instructs Moses to make a cast, of one of the snakes out of bronze. And when this is done, to stick it up on a pole high enough for all to see. So that anyone who is bitten, (the snakes were still there, because the sin was still evident, and God's punishment for rebellion remained) but anyone who was bitten, was to look to the bronze snake which had been lifted up (no doubt reminding them of their sin) but yes they must look to the snake and they would not die!

Beloved think about it, the billions of people around the world who don't realise, that when they nominally celebrate the birth of Jesus every year, and yet have no regard for the meaning of His Name, "the Lord is salvation," yes the Lord will save His people, even leaving Jesus as a baby in a feeding trough in a barn. They're actually calling condemnation down upon their own heads. Because in calling Him Jesus, (though this not be their intention), they are confessing Him as Lord and God. That one who saves His people from sin's curse, upon the cross. And yet refusing to come to Him, for that salvation!

Yes when "Jesus was lifted up," suspended between two worlds, the earth and heaven, life and death even heaven and hell. Which is what this lifting up of bodies means symbolically, as we saw in the book of Esther. Yes, when "Jesus was lifted up" He showed the world, that He truly is Jesus. The Lord, even God Almighty, the Sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe who also saves His people! 'She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their

sins.” And Brethren I want you to notice that it says, “Jesus will save his people from their sins.” It doesn’t say that He will save the whole world as some suggest, but “his people.” No even though Jesus’ death would have been efficacious for the sins of the whole world, that was never God’s plan. He died for the elect.

Again, John 3:14-15 “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert so the Son of Man must be lifted up that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” But this believing is not simply believing that Jesus was real and that God exists, no. It is believing that Jesus is Lord and Saviour. That is how Christians, true believers, look with faith to Jesus. As did those in the desert look toward that lifted up bronze snake, so that they would not die, but live. We look to the lifted up Jesus upon the cross. That He is the Lord and Saviour who died for us that we might not die, but live, with Him, forever. Praise God! But we must believe. We must look to the cross in faith. Yes the God who became man is the Lord and Creator and Ruler of the entire universe, and He is Jesus our Saviour!

And finally, He is “Christ” James says. Now the word *Christos* in Greek, is equivalent to the Hebrew word Messiah. And it simply means “anointed one,” chosen one. And when referring to Jesus, it means that promised deliverer who has been chosen, “anointed by God the Holy Spirit,” to pay that price which would reconcile God’s people to Himself! But throughout the scriptures there are also physical anointings that have taken place. Literally, an anointing with oil which was a ceremonial choosing, and a preferential setting aside of people for specific purposes. Priests were anointed with oil for service within the Levitical order. Kings were anointed by the Prophets when instructed by God as to His choosing. Yes, it was a sign of God setting that man aside, even His spiritual inauguration so to speak. God’s declaration that they had indeed been chosen for a special purpose! In Exodus we read of the tent of meeting also being “anointed by Moses.” This was in effect a symbolic sanctifying, or cleansing, of that meeting place of God. Aaron and his sons were anointed into the priesthood. In 1 Samuel 16, David is “anointed” with the holy oil in the presence of his brothers, showing that he would eventually take king Saul’s place.

In 1 Chronicles 16:19-22, we read of David recounting God’s past mercies to His people. David speaks of God calling the whole nation of Israel His “anointed ones.” And that is who true believers are. The “anointed” people of God. “Anointed” by the Blood of Christ! We read in Luke 4, in the fulfilment of Isaiah 61, of Jesus’ Own “anointing.”

Luke 4:16-21: 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Yes after Jesus finished speaking they were all blown away; they “were amazed and they spoke well of him” the text says. And yet when He turned the truth of their own iniquity upon them, (like James and his brothers before their conversion “he is out of his mind,” and similarly like we ourselves in our own hardness of heart) the people of His hometown took Jesus to the cliff in order to throw Him off!

What does this tell us Beloved of the impossibility of coming to the Lord, before He sends the Holy Spirit to “anoint” our souls with the cleansing Blood of Jesus? Now friends, there are many today in

Christian circles, who falsely speak of their own spiritual anointing. Even the special power that they and the select few have received from on high. And this special anointing enables them to do all of those spectacular and miraculous things. But as I have warned you many times over the years Beloved, beware. Because such people speak of the spiritual have-and-have nots. They come to us as their father the devil, "as angels of light," while have they have their hand in our pocket and are leading us down the path of spiritual oblivion! Because what they have, (that is indeed if they possess anything at all) comes not from our Heavenly Father, but from their father, even Satan himself! They stir emotions of discontent, making us feel as though Christ is not enough. We want heaven on earth!

So yes we read of priests being "anointed," kings being "anointed" and even the people of God by Him being called "my anointed ones." And yet all of this anointing is pointing us to Jesus the "Anointed One." The Lord, the Christ, the Redeemer, the promised Messiah. Of Him all the prophets and prophecies spoke. And to whom they pointed! We've read it many times over the years.

Luke 24:25-32: <sup>25</sup> He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. <sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Yes, "Were our hearts not burning within us." And why did they burn Beloved? Because "the Christ" the promised Messiah, the "Anointed One," opened up all of those things which spoke of Him! Oh friends what a privilege, to hear the scriptures taught by that One of whom they speak! So what have we learned today? Well we have simply sought to understand the three offices of Jesus. As Lord is the Sovereign Creator and Ruler of the universe! As Jesus, He is that God man who would save his people from their sins! And as Christ, He is the Messiah, the "Anointed One" of God, to whom all of the scriptures point! Yes Jesus is Lord, Jesus is Lord. Praise Him with hallelujahs for Jesus is Lord!

Let's pray!