

Current Affairs #48 – Clothed in the Glory of God

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One of the puzzling things to us has always been, how are we to understand God? Because we know that God is variously described as both with a singular reference and also with a plural reference. And as we see Him presented in the book of Genesis, chapter 1, we see the distinct presentations of all within the One. We see the deep, we see the Word, and we see the Spirit. There are other references in time, in the annals of Scripture, in which a similar presentation of God is visible. For example, at the baptism of Jesus, the voice speaking out of the heavens is clearly the Father because of the content of what He says: “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Whoever is calling another “son” is by reference, father. So, the voice of the Father speaks out of heaven, the Son has come up out of the water in the form of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit descends on Him in the form of a dove.

Over time, scholars and church fathers have attempted to put into human words this concept of three manifestations of one person. To our detractors, people such as Muslims have a very difficult time with how we have framed the theology of God as the corporate being. Muslims say they cannot believe in three Gods, because they understand what we are saying in the doctrine of the Trinity to be three Gods. And there are songs to that effect: God in three persons—the old Anglican hymn renders it “God in three persons, blessed Trinity.” Much of the discussion by the ancient fathers had to do with the term *hupostasis* (Strong’s Greek 5287), which is the same word as “substance,” which is ‘the posture under’—*hupo* means under, *stasis* means stance. They have attempted to render the understanding of God in material terms, hence, the doctrine of the Trinity.

I want to take a look at that, because I believe what we are seeing in heaven with the pre-existent Christ and the obedient Christ meeting each other in the center of the throne is an important mystery that God means to reveal now because it directly affects us. This is the time when the effect of that is meant to engulf us in the most glorious way. But to understand how two can be the same person requires an understanding of how three can be the same person. So, are we really talking about three Gods—one we call Father, the other we call Son, and the third we call Spirit? Or, are we talking about One person who is capable of three distinct manifestations, but perfectly coordinated, of one mind and of one nature?

In Genesis 1:2, we see the deep. The deep contains the water, and the deep contains the Spirit, and there is an unmistakable nexus between the Spirit and the water contained within the deep. So, there is one—the deep is one; the deep is all-encompassing. In that sense, the deep is God. Now, the question may be that of form versus intent. Which is to say, is God defined by a unitary form, or is God meant to be primarily known for His intent? You say, “Well, that is an artful way of presenting it.” No. Jesus said, “I came to show you the Father.”¹ And the finishing of the work of Jesus on the earth is accomplished by the Spirit, because the Spirit has come to take of what belongs to Christ and reveal it to us.² So if the intent of Christ and the support that God gave Him—all that is His, all authority, all power—was designed to reveal the Father, then the purpose of the Spirit coming to finish the work of Christ is by extension, also, to reveal the Father.

And the format in which the Father is to be revealed with Christ on the throne, and that format being *us*, we must be conformed to the likeness of the Father. Because if we are the visual sighting of the Father, if we are the incarnation of the work that Jesus came to do, inevitably we have to be choreographed to the exact specifications of that aspect of the Father that is most important to the Father to be revealed. And that is not His power. God did not require us to create new universes or enhance the existing creation. That is done. So, the thing to be represented about God is not power. He already is all powerful, and He has clothed Christ with all authority. But the thing to be represented is His nature. Hence the question, are we talking about a description of God in creation as being primarily associated with His form or His character?

Now, we know that He is too big to be seen, but when we speak of the form, we may either be speaking of that which contains everything or that which is contained. In other words, when we talk about God, are we talking about an emphasis on what God can do versus what God wants to be known as? Because that will be the biggest description of God possible, because He is the One deciding what about Himself is most important. At least for the purposes of creation, He created the heavens and the earth to remove the veil that covered the surface of the deep. This is the mystery to the understanding, you see, of the three as One. There is no question, if the Scriptures are to be believed, if Christ is to be believed, and if the continuing work of Christ through the Holy Spirit is to be believed as establishing this priority, the thing that God wants to be known as is Father. Father. Indeed, creation itself would host the revelation of Father.

Now, “Father” is really not a name; no more than the word “son” is a name. I am a father, but I have a name. My name is Samuel. I am popularly known as Sam. But to my children, I am father. They rarely ever refer to me by my name except to third persons. When they are speaking to me, they refer to me in the more popular term, Dad. I can do all sorts of things, and there are many things that I am able to do, but that is not how I wish to be known to my children. I do not want my children to be impressed by what knowledge I may have of the Scriptures. I do not want my children to be overwhelmed by any aspect of my presence that they might find overwhelming. I am just using examples. I am not suggesting that I have an overwhelming presence, by any measure. I am trying to define personhood for you, because personhood is what God intends to reveal. Personhood—*who* is God? Not what He can do. Not how awesome and impressive He is. When we sing about how magnificent God is, and awesome, and wonderful, and all of that, it does not mean that much to God. He knows He is all of that. What He wants to know is whether we know Him as Father. And in that is hidden the secret of whether or not we really want to be like Him, because it is inevitable that we would desire to be like Him if we acknowledge Him as Father.

Here is how John put it. This is from 1 John, chapter 3, beginning at verse 1.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children [sons in KJV] of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him (1 John 3:1 NKJV, comments added in brackets).

- “...it did not know **Him**”—Meaning, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the perfect Son, who is the quintessence of and the embodiment of the promise that we might be called sons of God.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... (1 John 3:2a)

Now, isn't that seemingly a contradiction? He says, “now we are...”, but it has not yet been revealed what we shall be.” No. It is no contradiction at all. We now occupy the status of being included

in Christ and, therefore, are the sons of God; but it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. “Shall” is future; it means from the point where John was writing this to some point in the future, this revelation of who we shall be will be given. So, this is a subject of prophetic reference. At some point, the prophecy as to who we shall be will be revealed, and here is what would happen:

but we know that when He is revealed, [here is the secret:] we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. [And look at this wonderful verse:] And everyone who has this hope [Hope is not present tense. But hope is rooted in promise, so it is not guess or wish.] in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (1 John 3:2b-3, comments added in brackets).

What is the point? You understand that He is refining you, and you allow yourself to be refined—to what degree? To the exact measure of the standard that belongs to Christ. Might I continue to quote the Scriptures? This is from Ephesians 4. “Then we shall no longer be infants (having been refined), but speaking the truth in love, we shall in all things grow up into Him who is the head, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.”³ What is it saying? There will come a time when we fully occupy the fullness of the stature that belongs to Christ (cf. Ephesians 4:13). We shall be like Him. And the time when we shall be like Him is as has been described here.

At that time, John said, it had not yet been revealed (when we become that mature son), but when that time comes... (Let me reread it. 1 John 3:2) “It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, because we will see Him as He is.” Now that Scripture has been forever used to mean when He comes back from heaven. No. He will remain in heaven until the work of us being refined to the fullness of the stature that belongs to Christ is finished, so that we are able to reveal Him on the earth. And the manner of our revealing of Him on the earth is a corporate revealing. That corporate revealing—many members, one body; that is a corporate entity—that corporate revealing will be as the mature son.

So, what am I saying? I am saying that the nature of God is the dominant characteristic of God. It is how God wishes to be known. And the name by which He wishes to be known is the name, Father. But that is not a proper name; that speaks of a relationship in which He is the Father, and

then there is another who is the Son. Because if you have Father, you must have Son. But this being does not occupy a form, except in incarnation. He remains the Eternal God, outside of time and space, outside of creation. He remains the Everlasting Father, outside of creation. So within this being, Father and Son exist as characteristics central to the definition of this one being, and this being is Spirit. He is not a man. He is not an angel. God is a Spirit.⁴

Now, the manifestations of God will always be consistent with being Spirit. Every aspect of God will lift us beyond the domain of time and space, and we will be in the realm of spirit whenever we understand God and revelation is given to us. That revelation of Spirit is going to have to be incarnated in human form, but anytime we touch God, anytime we encounter God, it will be a spiritual encounter. That is why He created man with a spirit, so that His being as Spirit can bear witness with our spirits. The witness that is borne, Spirit to spirit, is that we are sons of God.⁵

It is as simple as this. To my children, they look at one person and they see, Dad. To my wife, she looks at the same person, the exact same person in appearance, and she sees her husband. When my father was alive, he could look at the very same person, the exact same person, and he sees a son. Vis-à-vis all three of these examples, whereas I am the same being—I am the same form, I am the same composition, all of that I have—the same person has a totally different relationship with all of the different constituencies I delineated. So, I behave as a husband to my wife, and that husband is resident within the unitary form that I am. But my substance as a husband means that all other forms of me are *hupostasis* (Strong's Greek 5287), they are underneath that form when I am in that form. Do you see? That is why the word substance could be used.

The Son is substance of the Father when the Son comes to reveal the Father. He stands underneath the revelation of the Father as One who bears the weight of representation of the Father. That is the meaning of substance. It is not a material. I believe the ancients missed it when they attempted to understand incarnation and they attempted to understand representation as a separate and distinct person, as opposed to positions of priority. *Hupostasis*—substance; you are underneath. If you are representational, you are underneath. What dominates is that which is your imperative. So, Jesus is the substance of the Father, in that He stands underneath the representation of the Father, and therefore, does nothing of His own. He only does what He sees the Father doing.

But what is the power of substance? When you stand underneath the thing, you are clothed with that which you represent. You have all the authority, all of the power of the thing you aptly represent. So when Jesus is *hupostasis*—substance, postured beneath—the purpose of representation of the Father, He may properly claim the titles that belong to the Father. He might properly claim the title of “the Almighty.”⁶ He might properly claim the title of “He who was and is and is to come.”⁶ He might properly claim the title of the “Everlasting Father,” because that is who He came out of God to represent.⁷ So when He returned to the glory that He had with the Father before the foundations of the earth, it references the right to be clothed with all of the authority of the Father in creation. That is why He could say, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me” (cf. Matthew 28:18). And that is why His message is, “Father, let them be one in the manner in which You and I are one. You are in Me, and I am in You. I am carrying You, representationally, in My presence. And You clothed Me to do it with Your holy Self.”⁸

So when we see the throne of God, and the One we have known on the earth, who came into the earth, but He is designated as the Everlasting Father, He is designated as the Almighty, as the Eternal God, the One who was and is and is to come, titles that belong to the Father, and He is sitting on the Father’s throne. When He claims, “I am sitting down *with* my Father,” that is the concept of *meta* (Strong’s Greek 3326)—medium. Because He is clothed with the Father, He is the transmission point. He is the medium by which God moves from His position in the eternal into time and space, specifically into creation, the creation of heaven. The throne of God is the symbol of this eternal authority, so when He sits there holding the scroll in His right hand, it is appropriate for Him to say, “I am sitting in the position of My Father.”

And when the Lamb—His other self, His other representational self which brings all of us *in Him* before that throne of authority—is called the Lamb, the shouts of heaven concerning the Lamb is that He is worthy to take the scroll (cf. Revelation 5:8-14). It signifies that the authority to unveil the future has been passed to the Lamb, and that actually is the beginning of the book of Revelation: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants.” That is the opening lines of the book of Revelation. So when He hands the scroll of revelation, written on both sides, sealed with seven seals, to the Lamb, literally in creation, the authority to speak to the future, the

authority to reveal the future has been passed from the eternal God, represented in the One who holds the scroll, which is one of the selves of Jesus. This is in the same way that you may have a same man who is a father, and a son, and husband; in the same way that you may have the seven Spirits of God, seven characteristics of the One being; in that way, the Eternal God passes the authority to the Lamb, who has been slain. And all who are in the Lamb, and because they are in the Lamb, and only because they are in the Lamb, are available for the revelation of these things that are to come.

Now when the Lamb is seen in prehistory, before the Lamb has come, when he is seen from the book of Daniel, what is presented is the Lamb and all those who are in the Lamb, and he is the man above the waters (cf. Daniel 10:5-6; 12:6-7). This man is given to know the times and the seasons that the Father has kept by His own authority. This man is given to understand what the times are meant to be. And when that man speaks, he is not speaking on his own. The same Spirit who was in Christ is in that man, and he speaks the way Christ would speak. He speaks the words of the head. Those words are spoken through the body, and those words will bring life to all who are in the body, and those words will be like light, to bring light to all those who are in the House.

Yes. In representation, the one who is under has the authority of the one who is over. The defined characteristic of God that stands above all other characteristics is that of Father, because it is the rootstock based in love. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!” “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” When God operates as Father, He puts on display His awesome love in receiving us into Himself, via Christ, as His offspring. When Christ stands representational of the Father, He is clothed with the authority of the Father, but He is the perfectly obedient Son who does not speak on His own—the apt description of the Lamb. When the Spirit comes to reveal Christ and does not speak on His own, but takes of what He hears from Christ and reveals it, then it is the Spirit of Christ. It may be called the Spirit of Christ.

But the Spirit is spirit, the Son is spirit, the Father is spirit, because the nature of God Himself, the origin and existence of God Himself is ageless, timeless. He has no point of beginning, no point of end, because He is a spirit. Everything that God does is sustained by spirit. Everything that God

says is spirit and life.⁹ God is one being, who is Spirit, who manifests Himself spiritually as Father and Son.

We are to learn from the way God is, and this is what we are being taught and choreographed to: that we have the authority of the one to whom we submit. If we submit to Christ, *hupostasis*, then we obtain the substance of Christ. We stand under Him; He covers us. We are *in Him*. He stands under the Father; the Father covers Him. Look, the person who stands under is covered by the one he stands under. Simple. But being covered by, enveloped by, it speaks simultaneously of vulnerability and empowerment. Paul put it this way: “When I am weak, then I am strong” (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:10). Because it is the working of His mighty strength in me that comes to the fore when I do not offer my own strength in the place of His. When I submit, when am I weak, when I *hupostasis*, when I substance, when I come under Him, He stands up in me. He *histémi* (Strong’s Greek 2476), He stands up in me where I stand.

And the time is coming when His stance in us will be as perfect and complete as the manner in which Christ submitted to Him, and God raised Him up as both Lord and Christ. We are in the crucified Christ. We died with Him; we were buried with Him; we were raised with Him. Therefore, when we are seen in heaven, we are seen in the Lamb. That is why we follow the Lamb wherever He goes.¹⁰ That Lamb, the Lamb in full manifestation, is the face of God toward humanity. He is the man who stands above the waters of promise, the man in the image and likeness of God. That is God’s hope for creation. That is why He created us. It was what He will see when creation yields up the only purpose for which it was established: the manifestation of God in the Body of Christ.

How could we possibly be fearful of the times we are living in when these things are true? These are faithful sayings and true. You shall not be moved. You shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. You are like the trees that stand by the banks of the river that flows from the throne of God—twelve of them, one for each month of the year—and your fruit is for the healing of the nations. But I have to stop. We have touched the essence of Scripture. God has granted that we fellowship with the mystery of Christ, by whom the Father is revealed.

May all grace abound to you. May you be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Your labors are not in vain. I commend you to God and to the word of His grace that is able to build you up and to establish you amongst the sanctified. May grace, mercy, and peace be with you always. So be it.

Endnotes:

1. See John 14:9-11 NKJV: “Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.’”
2. John 16:12-15 NKJV: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.
3. See Ephesians 4:14-16 NIV: “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”
4. See John 4:24 NKJV: “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
5. See Romans 8:14-17 NKJV: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and

joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

6. See Revelation 1:8 NKJV: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”
7. See Isaiah 9:6 NKJV: “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
8. See John 17:20-22 NKJV: “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.”
9. See John 6:63 NKJV: “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”
10. See Revelation 14:4b NKJV: “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”