

THE SUPREMACY OF THE CROSS

I. The Centrality of Christ

1. The Son reveals exactly what God is like

* “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” (**Heb 1:1-3**).

a) “through the prophets at many times and in various ways”
(*polymerōs*: “glimpses of truth,” Phillips translation)

b) “heir of all things...through whom also he made the universe” (**Jn 1:2; Eph 1:10; Col 1:15-7**)

* He embodies God’s wisdom and purpose for all things (**I Cor 1:24; 30; Col 2:3**)

* All things will be consummated and harmonized under him (**Eph 1:9-11; Cp; 1:19-20**)

“Jesus Christ is the object of all things, the center towards which all things tend.”

Blaise Pascal

c) “his Son” = God *in person*.

d) “radiance of God’s glory”

e) “exact representation (*charaktēr*) of his being” (*huppostasis*)

2. Jesus' authority is greater than any OT author/prophet

a) "I have testimony weightier than that of John" (Jn 5:36)

b) "All things have been committed to me by my Father. *No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him*" (Mt 11:27).

c) "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known" (Jn 1:17-18).

“Jesus does not have a relative superiority, but an absolute superiority” [to previous revelations]. Hence, “[t]he Son’s revelation cannot ... have any rivals.”

Greg Burge

d) “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.... love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven” (Mt 5:38-39, 44-45)

e)His disciples James and Johnsaid, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of]] (Lk 9:54-55, NAS)

f) Luke 9:28-36 (Mount of Transfiguration).

While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen (vv.34-6)

3. Jesus is the One Complete Revelation of God

a) Jesus is “*the way and the truth and the life,*” and “no one comes to the Father except through [him]” (Jn 14:6, cf. 5:17-26; 6:44-6, 57; 8:19, 28; 14:6; 17:3)

b) Jesus is *the eternal Word of God* (Jn 1:1; Rev 19:13)

c) Jesus is *the light of God* (Jn 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5)

d) All the wisdom of God is found in him (1 Cor 1:24, 30; Col 2:2-3)

e) ... “in Christ all (*pan*) the fullness (*plērōma*) of the Deity (*theotēs*) lives in bodily form” (Col 2:9; cf., 1:19)

f) Jesus said, “Don’t you know me, Philip ...? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’” (14:9)?

4. He is the “life” of all Scripture and all Scripture is *about him*.

a) John 5:39-40, “ You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.... If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”

Luke 24:25-7, 45-6 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.... He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

“Jesus says the whole Old Testament, not merely a few selected texts, is about him.”

Graham Goldsworthy

“Christ himself indicates that the Old Testament from beginning to end is about himself” ...The whole of the Old Testament ... has as its central message the suffering and resurrection of Christ.”

Vern Poythress

II. The Centrality of the Cross

1. The Gospels are from the start oriented toward the crucifixion.

“The Gospels are passion narratives with extended introductions.”

Martin Kähler.

2. Paul equates the “Gospel” with” the message of the cross” (e.g. **I Cor 1:17-18, 23; Phil. 3:18)**

*** “I’ve resolved to nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (**I Cor 2:2**).**

3. In John, Jesus says he glorifies the Father when he is crucified (**Jn 12: 27-28, 31-33; cf. 13:31-32**).

4. The cross revolutionized Paul's conception of God.

*** “For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (I Cor. 1:18, 23-24).**

5. The cross defines the kind of love God IS.

* “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8)

* “Here is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. So also we should lay down our life for one another” (1 Jn 3:16)

* The Crucified Christ reveals a God of indiscriminating, non-violent, self-sacrificial, enemy-embracing love. Jesus establishes that loving like this is the proof that we are “children of [our] Father in heaven,” because *this is how he loves* (Mt 5:44-5; Lk 6:27-36).