

Day 215, John 18

by David Servant

Jesus' claim of deity and Peter's denial of Christ demonstrate God's amazing grace and redemption business.

Scripture: Exodus 3:14, Matthew 10:32, Luke 22:51, John 6:35, John 18:6, John 18:28, John 18:32, 1 Corinthians 5:7

Topics: "Divine Identity", "Gods Redemption"

Description

David Servant delves into the Gospel of John, highlighting unique aspects such as Jesus' captors falling to the ground when He identified Himself as 'I am,' echoing God's revelation to Moses. John exclusively records Jesus' profound 'I am' statements, emphasizing His divinity and unique claims. The account of Peter's impulsive actions and subsequent denial of Christ showcases God's amazing grace and redemption, despite human shortcomings and failures. Through Peter's story, the sermon explores the depth of God's forgiveness and restoration, challenging misconceptions about salvation and the extent of God's mercy. The sermon also contrasts the religious hypocrisy of the chief priests and Pharisees with the true sacrificial nature of Jesus as the Passover Lamb, ultimately fulfilling God's redemptive plan.

Transcript

Only John records the fact that Jesus' captors fell backwards onto the ground when Jesus identified Himself by saying, "I am He" (18:6). Note that in many translations that word He is italicized, indicating it was not part of the original text. So Jesus literally said, "I am," and then everyone fell to the ground. You may recall that "I AM" was a name by which God revealed Himself to Moses:

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Ex. 3:14).

In this same vein, John is the only Gospel-writer who recorded all of Jesus' "I ams." He declared: "I am the bread of life" (6:35); "I am the light of the world" (8:12); "I am the door of the sheep" (10:7); "I am the good shepherd" (10:11); "I am the Son of God" (10:36); "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25); "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6); and "I am the true vine" (15:1). When people say that they believe that Jesus was "just a good man," or "a great moral teacher," it shows they haven't done their homework. Those who are only good men or great moral teachers don't claim to be the Son of God and the way, the truth and life.

Every time I read about one of Peter's antics, it makes me feel better about myself. He was full of zeal but empty of understanding, and for that reason, he sliced off the ear of the high priest's slave attempting to

defend Jesus. It would seem more likely that Peter was aiming for the slave's head or neck. Incidentally, only Luke, a physician (Col. 4:14), mentions in his Gospel that Jesus immediately healed the slave's ear (Luke 22:51). Within the space of a minute or two, all those who came to arrest Jesus witnessed two undeniable miracles: the healing just mentioned and the entire crowd falling to the ground when Jesus revealed Himself. God was still trying to reach their hardened hearts. Amazing grace!

By the time John penned his Gospel, Peter's denial of Christ had been recorded in all three of the other Gospels. We may have thought that John would have excluded it, just out of courtesy to Peter, or to his memory, as he was likely in heaven by the time John wrote his Gospel. Yet John did include it, and I can only think the Holy Spirit inspired him to do so in order to showcase God's amazing grace one more time---as it was extended to Peter.

I've met people who argue vehemently that if Peter had died after he denied Christ, he would have gone to hell, since Jesus promised that He will deny before His Father those who deny Him before men (Matt. 10:32-33). That seems to be an unnecessary debate, as Peter didn't die until many years after he was long forgiven by Jesus and reconciled to Him. Who holds the power of life and death in His hands? Regardless of Peter's spiritual standing after he denied Christ (and wept bitter tears I must add), God kept him alive long enough to restore him and ultimately bring him into heaven. That is the grace of God. Professing Christians who are so happy to have God immediately cut off those who fall reveal how far their hearts are from God's heart. God is in the redemption business.

How ironic it was that the chief priests and Pharisees would not enter Pilate's Praetorium lest they be defiled from eating the Passover (18:28), yet they were there to condemn and kill the Lamb of God, the true Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). That is a picture of religion.

Under Roman law, the Jews could punish lawbreakers, but they were forbidden to execute anyone. Had the priests and Pharisees executed Jesus themselves, they would have done it by stoning Him. So according to 18:32 (and to 12:32-33 as well), Jesus was accurate in His foretelling that He would die by hanging on a cross, the Roman method of capital punishment. Jesus is never wrong.

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