

Installed as the Son of God with Power

By Bob Vincent

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Bible Text: Romans 1:4; John 1:1
Preached on: Sunday, April 21, 2019

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1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, 7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

Let's pray.

Lord, please help me to remember the things I need to remember in order that we may be profited by your word and not distracted. Help, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

If we look at the Gospel of John for a moment, it's important that we understand some things about Jesus before he ever came into the world in order to understand our text in the book of Romans. That's John 1, if you'll turn along with me, John 1 and beginning at verse 1.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

I want to think with you for a moment here what's being said. Here we're told that in the very beginning in eternity, "In the beginning was the Word," we need to understand that Jesus of Nazareth has always been but not as a human being. Jesus of Nazareth, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now I am with the choir and what does that tell us about the choir and me? I'm distinct from the choir. I am not a part of the choir, though if I weren't a preacher, I would love to be in

this choir. You have a great choir. But I'm distinct. So we're told here that in the very beginning before anything ever existed, Jesus who is here called the Word and not called Jesus, and that's important, was with God, meaning he's distinct from God. And yet then we're told something else, we're told that the Word was God, and that is to say that Jesus is none other than Almighty God. He is God. He always has been God but he hasn't always been Jesus.

Let's think about that for a moment. So in this very first verse of this very first chapter of the Gospel of John, we see something of the nature of Jesus because we're told in verse 14,

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

That is, the Word who always has been, who is as a matter of fact Almighty God, became a real human being just like you and me but he has always been God, distinct from the Father and yet God. So we need to understand this as we look at our text in Romans, that something happened to Jesus when he rose from the dead and that's our theme today. Lest we get confused, it's important that we understand that what happened to Jesus happened only to his human nature because Jesus has always been God.

So what is the name of God before Jesus is born? God's name in the Hebrew text of Scripture is comprised of four Hebrew letters: the yod; the he; the vav; and the he; which would be pronounced Yahweh. That's God's name, Yahweh.

Now God's name, some cults will tell you that God's name is Jesus but they don't understand the Scriptures when they say that because God's name has never been Jesus. But when God came into the world and entered into the womb of the blessed virgin Mary, he became a human being. Nothing was taken away from what he was in all eternity but added to his divine nature was now a human nature. So Jesus is both truly God, fully God, actually God, 100% God, and at the same time he has become what he was never before, a real human being just like you and me in every way except he never sinned and he did not have a sinful human nature but he had a true human nature.

So it's important that we keep this in mind because Jesus' name, which would be pronounced Yeshua or Yehoshua, is comprised of two Hebrew words: the Hebrew word for God or for God's proper name, Yahweh; and the Hebrew word for salvation, and that's why they are told that they will name this child Jesus, or Yeshua, because he will save his people from their sins. That's what that name means. Yeshua, or Yehoshua means "he will save his people from their sins." In fact, that name may sound like another name in the Bible. Who was the person who succeeded Moses in the Old Testament? Joshua, and in Hebrew that's Yehoshua, and after the time of the Babylonian captivity, it's pronounced Yeshua. So the name Jesus and the name Joshua are one and the same. So we need to distinguish the Jesus of the New Testament as Jesus of Nazareth and the Old Testament leader, Joshua, the son of Nun, or Jesus, the son of Nun.

So we have to have that in mind because it's important that we don't get this confused. Now that may be confusing but that's the distillation of what the Bible teaches. So he's God. He's always been God. He's distinct from the Father. Everything that has been created was created through him and in the course of time he became a real human being just like us. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Now if you turn to the left from the Gospel of John and go to the very end of the Gospel of Matthew, you discover another passage of Scripture that's very helpful in understanding what St. Paul is talking about and we read there on page 835 at the very bottom of chapter 28 of Matthew, it says this in verse 16,

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.

Why would they doubt? Because I want to tell you something, Easter Sunday is such good news that it just seems impossible to be and that's how the disciples reacted. That's why they said, "I can't believe this." Some doubted. In fact, Thomas, who was not there when Jesus appeared to the other disciples in the Upper Room, said to them, "Unless I touch him, I won't believe." And so Jesus came back and he invited Thomas to do something, he said, "Look, it is I myself. Take your finger and put it here in the holes in my hand and take your hand and stick it in the hole of my side." Do you understand something, that the first disciples were absolutely convinced of the truth of Easter Sunday because they not only saw Jesus, they not only heard Jesus, but as John says in his first letter, "Our hands handled him. They touched him. They felt him." And he also ate in front of them. He ate bread with them. He ate fish with them and he said to them, "I'm not a ghost. I'm not a spirit. I am the same Jesus who died on the cross that you saw me die, and now you see, you touch, you handle, and know that I am alive." But it's such good news.

So in Matthew, Jesus says something astounding to them in verse 18, Matthew 28:18,

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority [all power] in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Now wait a minute. He's God, doesn't he have all power? Yes, as God he has always had all power, but you need to understand the mission of Jesus. The mission of Jesus was to become the second Adam. Remember what the first Adam did? The first Adam destroyed the earth. Why do people die? Why do babies die? Why is there divorce? Why is there war? Why is there conflict? Why are there lawsuits? Why do people go bankrupt? Why is there cancer and heart disease and all these other things? What's wrong with the world? Well, the world we live in is not identical to the world that God created because the world that God created he said was very good. There was nothing wrong with that world and what was missing in that world was death. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."

That's what Easter's about. It's about the fact that God did for humankind what we could never do for ourselves. A man brought all of this misery on our planet, all of the horrible things in history. An historian once said, "History is simply one damned thing after another," and if you really read history, you understand there are no real heroes in history. Every hero in history is a flawed character. History is just full of terrible things and it all came about by the sin of our first parents.

So God without ceasing to be God in the person of his eternal Son, came into this world and was Incarnate in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary and was made man, and he lived a sinless life and what he did was to die on the cross and rise from the dead, and in his resurrection from the death, from the dead, he conquered death. That's what it's about and he says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." What's he saying? He's saying that when he became a man, he came into this world in humiliation, in a state of weakness and frailty. When Jesus was born, he was utterly and totally helpless. Though he's Almighty God, eternal God, with the Father in heaven for all time, yet Jesus became a weak, frail human being who was subject to all of the frailty and all of the weakness that you and I are. Jesus was tempted in all the ways that you and I are, yet he never sinned.

He did not have all power as a man when he lived on earth, and the final element in his estate of humiliation was dying on the cross and being buried. Think about what happened. His heart ceased to function. When that Roman soldier took a spear and shoved it into his rib cage and punctured the outer part of his heart and the blood and the water came out, that's absolute proof that Jesus was murdered on the cross. And he died. He really actually did die. He was as dead as anyone that you've ever seen who was dead. That's the way it was and so they buried him. They buried him on Friday evening just before sunset and then he was in the tomb on Friday and on the Jewish Sabbath which began at sundown Friday, and all day on the Jewish Sabbath until it ended with the first day of the week which began on Saturday night, and early Sunday morning, he rose from the dead. That's when Jesus ceased to be in his estate of humiliation and entered into his estate of exaltation.

So we need to understand what we have going on here. We have an exalted man, we have a man endowed with power, we have a man who is the eternal Son of the eternal God, there never was a time that he was not, who became a man subject to all of the frailty and weakness that you and I are, and yet he came to a point, having died and having risen, in which he then becomes what he had never been before, a human being endowed with power. You see, all of this is about his being the son of David, as we'll see in a moment in Romans, but what I want to get across again is that in Matthew 28:18, he says, "All authority," all power, "in heaven and on earth has been given to me," and that has an implication. The implication is to get out of this church. Wait a minute. No, don't tell them that. No, the implication is to go outside the church and take the good news to people that live around you and tell them that Jesus died on the cross and rose again because I'm going to tell you something: as a student of history and of many other things, the only hope of our world is Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

Think of the terrible news out of Ceylon, Sri Lanka. Think about a religion that believes the only way you can know for sure that you're gonna go to heaven is to die in the cause of the Koran, the prophet Mohammad, or Islam. John 3:16 of Islam is to die yourself. That's the only way you can know that you're gonna go to heaven. Why do you think people will strap on a suicide vest and blow themselves up in order to kill other people? It is thoroughly consistent with the teachings of the Koran and the Hadith. The only way to know is to die yourself.

But the good news of the Gospel is that Christ died in our place and rose again in our place and that is the message. That's why Jesus says in light of the fact that he as a glorified man, as a man endowed with power, as a man endowed with something he did not have when he walked on this earth, tells us to,

19 Go therefore [he says] and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Now to turn back to our text, Romans 1, we have some background that helps us understand this. In Romans 1, there on page 939, we're told this about Jesus. First of all, that in verse 3, he was descended from David. Why is that important? Well, God had promised David that of his descendants he would raise up someone to sit on his throne to rule over all the nations and to subdue all of the Gentiles to himself, and in the resurrection of Jesus, that's what happens.

So he's descended from David according to the flesh and in verse 4 he was declared to be the Son of God in power. Declared. Actually that verb can be translated "he was appointed, he was installed as the Son of God with power." And some people have difficulty translating it that way and weaken it with, "he was declared," but the point I want you to understand is that the Lord Jesus on Easter Sunday became something he had never been before. Just as in his incarnation he became something he had never been before, he was then God and man, 100% God, 100% man, yet not 200%, just 100%, so in the resurrection the God-man is endowed with power as a human being, as the successor of King David to rule over all the nations. The message of the church is the message of an ambassador going and saying to people, "The King is coming! Now is the time to bow your knees and submit to this King before he arrives because once he arrives, it's going to be too late."

Do you understand that picture? The picture is of a conquering army, only we don't use swords, we simply proclaim with our mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father and we command all men everywhere to repent and believe the Gospel, and here's the lesson: there is coming a day when the King of glory, the one who is exalted to the right hand of the Father, will return to earth and when he returns to earth, it will be too late for millions and millions of people but now is the opportunity for the nations to turn from their sins and rebellion against God and against his Christ, and embrace his Christ as he's offered in the Gospel. That's what we deal with here. A man endowed with power.

Remember that what Jesus does he does as a man, not as God, even though he is God. But now that he's exalted to the right hand of the Father, he is ruling from the throne of David which is at the right hand of God in heaven.

So what we're told here is that Jesus in Romans 1:4 received his investiture, that is, he actually became for the first time in history the Son of God with power. You see, that takes us back to the ancient world. When ancient kings refer to themselves as the son of a particular god and the God of Israel designated Israel's rulers beginning with King David as his sons, you see, it's in that line that we understand then that Jesus who is in his divine nature always God, eternal God, distinct from the Father and yet one God with him, is uniquely the Son of God because he is commissioned as the King of Israel to rule over all nations, Jewish and Gentile alike, as the Son of God with power.

That's what happens in the resurrection. You see, if we really get a hold of what happens in the resurrection, we understand that Jesus really did rise from the dead and his resurrection is the most significant event in all of human history because there's a real sense in which every ruler on earth is part of a group of usurpers. What do I mean? Do you understand that when Adam failed to do what God commissioned him to do, which was to subdue the earth, a usurper came to power, that usurper's name is Satan. Do you understand that this world is under the influence of Satan? Do you understand that Satan is the instigator of all evil along with human nature and along with the traditions of our world? Do you understand that's all because our first parents failed to do what God commanded them to do, and that's why the world is the mess it's in.

And you understand that Satan was telling a half-truth, which is also a half-lie, when he offered Jesus all of the kingdoms of the world and all of their glory when he showed it to Jesus in a vision, and he said, "Because it's mine to give and I give it to whomever I choose"? Think about that. Why are we ever upset when we discover bad things about political leaders? They got on the throne by the manipulations of Satan. But here's the other great biblical truth: Satan can only do what God permits him to do, ultimately for your good and God's glory.

So we understand the world is in an awful mess, we're not surprised that it's in an awful mess, we're not surprised when we open the door of the smoke-filled room and discover all of the plots and conspiracies that people have engaged in to come to power, but yet on Easter Sunday, Jesus in rising from the dead defeats Satan, defeats death, and opens the door to heaven to everyone who will come. So Easter Sunday is an incredibly important time because what it means is this, it means that the world one day is going to be put right. One day everything will be under Jesus' feet. One day even death itself who was defeated by Christ in his resurrection, will be absolutely utterly and totally destroyed and that's going to take place when you and I rise from the dead.

You see, Easter reminds us of something. We're not like the Greek philosophers who believed that the human body was not important, it was only the soul that was important. The teaching of the text of the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments is this: your body is important as well as your soul and in the teaching of the New Testament, the

moment that a believer dies, that believer's soul or spirit goes to be with the Lord, then the flesh is laid in the grave or cremated, but that's not the end. Because Jesus died and rose again, there's coming a day when the trumpet will sound, when the archangel will shout and when the dead in Christ will rise.

Do you understand that you and I are going to have the same kind of body that Jesus had after he rose from the dead? Think of what Jesus could do. He had a real body. He could eat broiled fish. He could be touched and handled and he could go through a wall. Wow. What kind of a body is that? It was a real human body and yet it had amazing powers, amazing abilities. Do you understand that one day when Jesus returns to this earth and the trumpet sounds and the archangel shouts, that you're gonna have a body just like Jesus? You're going to have a body that's a glorified human body and that means you'll be able to do amazing things. You'll never get sick again. You'll never get weak again. Your brain will not age the way that my brain is aging. Your knees won't give out the way mine give out. It means you'll have incredible strength, incredible stamina, and the ability to do things that are fantastic when you rise from the dead.

So remember that for Christianity, we have a double hope, a double confidence: life after death when the soul is departed from the body and goes to be with Jesus, and then when Jesus returns, our souls are reunited with our bodies. How can that be? Well, the teaching of the testaments is this: that God raises the body and we will know new life in Christ. That's why I'm excited about Easter. I'm excited about Easter because Easter is the great commemoration of a Ruler on this earth for the very first time since Adam sinned who is going to completely destroy Satan, completely destroy death, and completely rescue all of us and we will live on an earth that is unlike anything you can imagine. It's going to be an earth where lions will lie down with sheep, and bears will graze, and a little child will be able to pick up a coral snake or a cobra and play with it, and they will not hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and all of that happens because of Easter Sunday.

What if Christ did not die and rise again? What's the meaning of life? It means that your life and mine has no more significance than that of a possum that's run over on the side of the road. That's a pretty amazing statement, isn't it? You see, the death of Jesus and his resurrection gives us great confidence and gives us great significance that we are now adopted into God's family and we have great hope.

May we pray.

Lord, we thank you that Jesus died and rose again from the dead. He really did die and he really did rise from the dead and we thank you that because he rose from the dead, he has been invested and installed as King of kings and Lord of lords. We thank you that there is a man seated at your right hand who understands us as no one else. Lord, we thank you that the one who sits at your right hand has been through everything any of us here has ever been through, and that's why with great understanding not only with his divine omniscience but with his human experience we have someone who sympathizes

with us in our frailty. Lord, bless us and keep us and encourage us we pray for Jesus' sake. Amen.