

UNDIMINISHED DEITY

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The apostle John had a brother James and they were the sons of Zebedee. Zebedee's wife is thought to be Salome (Mark 15.40. Mark 16.1) who was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

After the resurrection, John was an elder at the church in Ephesus. The Emperor Domitian did not approve of him or his faith and so John was exiled to the Greek island of Patmos before being allowed to return to Ephesus where he eventually died.

On the island of Patmos, John had visions of future events recorded in the final book of the Bible a book sometimes wrongly called the Revelation of St John the Divine. It is the revelation TO John.

It began with a vision of the Lord Jesus and we read in Revelation 1. 17 that when John saw this vision he fell at His feet as dead but the hand of the Lord touched and comforted him and said, "Fear not".

It has been said that there are 366 Fear nots in the Bible, one for every day of the year including the leap year.

The Lord continued, "I am He that liveth but once was dead and, behold, I am alive for evermore".

At the raising of Lazarus in John 11. 43 the Lord Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come forth!". Had he not said Lazarus all the graves would have been opened.

But on that occasion, He also said, "I am the resurrection and the life". He did not say, "I am the life and the resurrection!". He was speaking of eternal life.

There are those who debate when eternal life begins for the Christian but does it not start at conversion? He has given us eternal life not conditional life.

What are we to understand by the visions John saw on Patmos? The word vision here means revelation.

The first vision was of the Lord Jesus in glory, staggering glory, majesty and authority. What John saw was undiminished Deity. God was manifest in the flesh and in the opening chapter of John's gospel we read, "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only Begotten Son of God".

The Eternal Word, who was with God from eternity past, became flesh, became a person. God had prepared a body for Him. John saw His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration along with Moses and Elijah. That proved His Deity which on Patmos had not diminished. Nor could it. Nor will it. The Lord Jesus did not stop being who He was... undiminished Deity,

There is one sin that cannot be forgiven and that it is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12) which is the denial of Jesus Christ as Deity.

The Lord has a glorified body which raises the question, if it is a glorified body can it still have the marks of the nails in his hand and feet? Elsewhere in the book of Revelation, chapter 5.6, John says that he saw the Lamb as it had been slain.

To one of the churches in Revelation 3, the Lord Jesus says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock". This has been taken to be a text to use for the preaching of the Gospel and yet it indicates that some churches will not let the Lord Jesus in. He is barred from His House and therefore His glory is not seen or wanted. His Presence is not there.

We read in Colossians 1. 18, that in all things the Lord Jesus is to have the pre-eminence. But in many churches and fellowships, He does not. Many Pentecostal, charismatic and house churches concentrate of personal testimony what members of the congregation have done and achieved, and then there is singing of modern worship songs in pop music style, dancing, raising hands, hysterical acts and so on. The emphasis is on the Holy Spirit and gifts, but in all things the Lord Jesus is to have the pre-eminence.

In 1 Samuel 4. 21, we read of the wife of one of Eli's son, Phineas. She had a son and called his name Icabod because the glory had departed from Israel. Today in many of our churches and fellowships, and for reasons already given, the glory has departed from such churches.

Some denominations recite the so-called Lord's Prayer and leave out the last line... For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory.

The Old Testament states that without a vision the people perish (Proverbs 29 18). What is needed is a fresh and enduring vision of the Lord Jesus and total concentration upon Him. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10.17) not the words of man. We are to preach Christ and Him crucified (2 Corinthians 4.5) and not preach self. The words of man cannot save; the words of the Lord can and does.

We ignore His undiminished Deity at our peril. The relationship with the Lord depends on our knowledge of His Deity and Glory. The strength of any church depends on this.

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