

Johannine Studies

Lecture 7 Study Notes – March 11, 2008

1. ***The Humanity of Jesus***- (Homework: Look for examples in John of the humanity of our Lord). One example is John 7:1-10 which has Jesus changing His mind about going to Jerusalem.
2. The Nature of Faith or believing in John (see Culpepper page 97 and following)
 - a. John contains the most probing treatment of the experience of faith in the New Testament.
 - b. The Gospel also talks about free will and determinism. (John 3:16 and John 6:65)

On one hand the invitation is offered to all, but not all accept. Yet John says all who believe have been drawn by God. The initiative remains with God.
 - c. For John, believing is not a static response; but it is a way of life. Those who believe can change for better or for worse.
 - d. Let their response to this message reveals whether they are from above or from below, one of the children of God or one of the children of the devil. Here again is the dualism of John.
 - e. The purpose of the Gospel is to believe—literally, to keep on believing. (John 20: 31)
 - f. The greatest work according to Jesus and John is to believe. (John 6:29)
3. The lowest level of faith is for those who must have a sign or a miracle to convince them to follow Jesus. 2:11 is a good example of the disciples needing a sign to follow Jesus, yet some people don't even believe with all the signs—see 6:26. In addition, doubting Thomas must see the wounds in Jesus' side and hands before he will believe that Jesus rose from the grave—John 20:24-25. And even after Thomas is shown Jesus' wounded body, Jesus says: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (20:29)
4. The next level of faith is represented by those who come to Jesus because they hear His words. The Samaritan woman at the well is a good example because she says, "He told me everything I've done." The Samaritans in town "believed because of His word." (4:41) And in verse 42, it says, "we have heard for ourselves." Yet there are those who have heard and seen that cannot believe. Look at 6:34-37; 10:22-30.
5. The highest level of faith, according to Culpepper, is illustrated by those who know, love and bear witness to that love. Faith, as it matures, goes from believing it to knowing it. Some people have been a Christian so long that not only do they live by faith that Jesus loves them, they know it. Faith after growing and maturing becomes almost like a type of knowledge itself.
6. 98 times the Gospel uses the verb "to believe." According to Kysar there are three different objects of faith for the Fourth Gospel. (page 109)
 - a. Most often one is asked to believe in Jesus, a personal relationship with Him. The most common construction is the use "believe" with preposition "eis" (into or in), and the object of such preposition is Jesus himself.
 - b. Sometimes the object of the belief is not the person but the statements He makes. "Believe the words Jesus speaks" (2:22). Not too much of a difference because it is obvious, at least to me, that one implies the other. Because if you put your faith in Jesus as the Revealer, you believe what Jesus says to be true.
 - c. The third is different; sometimes there are faith statements about Jesus. In such instances, the reader is called to believe that Jesus is the Revealer, the Messiah, the Father's Son (11:27). The emphasis has switched away from faith in a personal relationship to an intellectual acceptance—creed or doctrine. (James 2:19 a prime example of this kind of belief) (What kind of faith is 1 John 5:1?)

7. According to Kysar, John appears to be partly responsible for the beginning of the shift in the early church toward a creedal understanding of faith. In other words, the Gospel of John, probably the earliest book in the Bible, that we begin to find the word “faith” with a creedal ring. He was not aware of this shift, because he was fundamentally advocating a personal relationship with Jesus, but evidently, the community was being threatened by people who believed differently. I don’t see how this shift can be avoided, given differences of opinion in doctrinal matters, but we’ve got to help our people to understand the difference between being doctrinal correct (which is very important with our core beliefs) than having a personal relationship with Jesus.
8. However, the Johannine Christians doubtlessly believed that a personal relationship with Christ leads naturally and logically to faith statements about who Christ is. In other words, another motive for the rise of the creedal concept of faith is the desire to speak honestly and clearly about the Christ figure.
9. John never uses the word faith, but always to believe. To John, faith is not a noun, but a verb. It is an active, ongoing process, in which to believe not only means believing once, but believing over and over again. It is not a static concept but an ongoing dynamic state of being.
10. One of the more curious and thought provoking passages in John about faith is John 2:20-25. What does it mean to say that to some of those who believed Jesus did not trust them? A possible explanation is the Parable of Soils in Matthew 13. Their level of faith just wasn’t deep in the soil to bear the fruit that Jesus felt comfortable being around.
11. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the Hope of the Future in John’s Gospel. (Pneumatology- What is believed and taught about the Spirit)

According to Culpepper (page 103) there are two distinctive thoughts to John’s understanding of the life of the believer—the Holy Spirit and the hope of the future.

12. The Greek word for spirit is “pneuma” meaning breathe or wind. According to Kysar, pneuma is found 24 times in John’s Gospel, referring most of the time to the Spirit of God but occasionally to the human spirit (John 11:33; 13:21).
13. According to Kysar, the Gospel speaks of the Spirit in four distinct but interrelated ways.
 - One**, it refers to the power and character of God given to Jesus. (1:32, 33; 3:34)
 - Two**, it refers to the life of the Spirit. Meaning, that the Spirit that is associated with the presence of God results in a new life for the believer. Through Jesus the divine life is given to believers- (7:39; 20:22)
 - Three**, the Spirit is the transition to this new life in Christ Jesus. The believer is born out of water and the Spirit (3:5), and the new birth is done of God not of human activity (3:6; 6:63). The idea of the birth of Spirit is a metaphor for the way in which the life of the believer changes because of God’s presence.
 - Four**, the Spirit is associate with a uniquely Johannine expression, the “Advocate,” paraclete, or helper.
14. John’s characteristic way of speaking about the Holy Spirit is the word “Paraclete” or in the Greek, “paraketos.” It is the only Gospel to speak of it so. It basically means “to call beside or come along beside of.” It has been translated as “comforter” or “counselor” or “advocate” depending on the translator.
15. Different shades of the meaning “Paraclete.”

One, it has the image of a legal counsel that helps assist a client in a court case—hence an advocate or counselor. The Paraclete is one who intercedes, entreats, or makes appeals for another. He is a defense attorney who speaks on the behalf of his or her client.

Two, the Paraclete is “one who comforts, and consoles another.” The King James Version uses the word “Comforter.”

Three, it also means one who “proclaims or exhorts.” It is the Proclaimer.

16. In John 14-16, the author has the following to say about the nature and function of the Paraclete. The Nature—It comes from and is related to the Father and Son. It is identified numerous ways.
- a. The Paraclete comes only if Jesus departs (15:26; 16:7,8,13).
 - b. The Paraclete comes from the Father (15:26).
 - c. The Father gives the Paraclete in response to Jesus’ request (14:16).
 - d. The Paraclete is sent in Jesus’ name (14: 26).
 - e. Jesus sends the Paraclete from the Father (15:26, 16:7).
 - f. It is another Paraclete, implying that Jesus is the first (14:16).
 - g. It is the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; 16:13).
 - h. It is the Holy Spirit (14:26).