

## **Johannine Studies**

### **Lecture 5 Study Notes – February 26, 2008**

1. As I said in the previous lecture: “In John the Logos constitutes one of the highest claims Christians have made for Christ: he existed from the beginning. Let’s look at the prologue itself. What does the passage affirm about Logos (see handout from Kysar, page 41)? Agent of creation: So fundamental to the sense and purpose is the revelation in Christ that he must be conceived as the shaping force in the very beginning of existence, and indeed still holds things together (Colossians 1: 16-17). The Logos has power over creation: Jesus continued to have power over creation by turning water into wine in chapter 2. According to one ancient poet, “the water recognized its creator and blushed.” (see Culpepper p. 93 for more examples) (also see signs and their meaning handout)
2. How did Jesus get to be the Messiah or Christ? Three views: adoptionistic, agency, and incarnational. (John: The Maverick Gospel by Robert Kysar page 44-46)
3. **Adoptionistic Christology-** It begins by saying that Jesus was a man who, because of His obedience to God, was adopted as God’s Messiah. This adoption may have taken place at His Baptism (Ebionites) or at any other time in His ministry, but more likely at the death and resurrection. No pre-existence of Christ or divine birth but in living an obedient life He was made the Messiah. According to some it was faintly present in some of the New Testament literature (Maybe Acts 2:36; 3:13; Romans 1:3-4).
4. **Agency Christology-** Declares that God took the initiative to send a personal representative to perform the revelatory and saving function of the Father. So, in short, it just means that Jesus is “sent” like a prophet to save his people. According to Kysar (p. 44) the birth narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are essentially expressions of a form of Agency Christology. In my opinion, such views or interpretations are our way of seeing the partial truth of who and what Jesus is compared to complete picture of His nature. In other words, our language and our concepts just don’t embrace everything that Jesus came to represent.
5. **Incarnational Christology-** Represents the boldest claims of who Christ is thought of being. Some form of prior existence is asserted. In Incarnational Christology, the divine Logos has become human. It also claims that prior to the very beginning Jesus was divine, and at no point in time in his life and ministry did He become divine. This all took place before creation was ever conceived in the mind of God. John’s prologue is the poster child scripture for Incarnational Christology, with Colossians 1:15-20 and Philippians 2:6-11 speaking to it as well.
6. The heart of the Christian message, according to Kysar, is that the Logos is on a journey and camps out (dwells 1:14) among human beings for a while in order to do the will of the father.
7. Christological Titles in 1:18-51 (a summary of the major labels/facets of the rare and beautiful diamond of Christ) which explicates its understanding of Christ.
8. **The Revealer-** Jesus’ role from the very beginning is to reveal God (1:18 ). As revealer, Jesus does what He sees the Father doing (5:19,30) and what the Father has taught Him (8:28). Therefore, whoever has seen Jesus has seen the Father (12:45; 14:9). John doesn’t mention redemption, instead it is the revelation of God that is our redemption according to John. According to Culpepper, eternal life consists in coming to know God through this revelation and living in response to this knowledge of God. It is what it means to believe. ( Page 94)

9. **Lamb of God-** is found on the lips of John the Baptist (vs. 29) and one of the disciples (vs. 36). The reference to the “Lamb of God” can have many meanings:
  - a. Jesus is the new symbol of the Passover, the new liberation from bondage, offered by God.
  - b. The innocent victim whose suffering and death gain the removal of human sin.
  - c. The figure who appears at the end of time to overcome all the evil in the world (see Revelation 5).
  - d. The servant of God whose suffering atones for the sins of the world (explain expiation and propitiation; see Paul handout)

These meanings are certainly in John, but maybe John wanted us to see the liberating function of the Lamb of God in a broader sense such as: ***the lamb of God is the liberating revealer of God. His freeing function occurs not strictly through his suffering and death but through his very person. To know Jesus is to be freed.*** It is through Jesus that folks found real freedom (8:31-32). He freed people from the ruler of this world (12:31 14:30; 16:11). Redemption takes place primarily through the response of faith in Jesus as the revealer. (see my notes on Paul’s theology of redemption page 72)

10. **Messiah-** God’s chosen one (1:41). This is reference to the special agent of God who is to come with the expectation of an ideal king who will rule justly and conquer Israel’s enemies. However, according Kysar, by Jesus’ day all the messianic titles (and there were many) were suggestive of a political ruler. Someone who would rescue the poor and oppressed; who would correct religious falsehoods; who would destroy the forces of evil in the world; and who was thought of in various ways like a man, extra-ordinary human being, and even an angelic type of divine creature. Therefore, in using the Messianic titles, John wanted us to know without shadow of doubt that Jesus was the fulfillment of the whole body of expectation related to Savior figure. What are some of them:
  11. **The Son, Son of God (vs. 34, 49), Son of Man (vs.51)** (Culpepper, p. 95). John uses “Son” 18 times, Son of God 9 times, and Son of Man 15 times to describe Jesus. ***The first reference to the Sonship of God is 1:14, 18, especially in verse 18 when Jesus is referred to by His father’s side*** (I wonder how much of Jesus’ teachings about God the Father comes from His own childhood with His relationship to Joseph). John 1:34 speaks of the Son of God as testified by John the Baptist. Many scriptures follow that speak of Jesus as being the unique Son—by unique we mean different from beings like ourselves who have been created by God.
  12. **Unique meaning that His home is the heavenly realm with God** (John 3: 13-15; 6: 62; 16:28). All this means is He doesn’t belong to the world. His origin is somewhere else—it is divine.
  13. **Therefore the Son has been sent by the Father from Heavenly home** (3:34; 4:34; 8:26; 9:4, and 17:3). Like a cosmic prophet or divine prophet, the Son is sent forth in our world to represent God and speak for Him.
  14. **Then the Son of Man will be “lifted up” and ascend into heaven.**
    - a. It is Jesus speaking of His “glorification.” His death is His glorification (12:23) and that honoring Him is honoring the Father (13:31). The irony of all of this is that He will die, and this death (which is the world’s shameful way of dealing with him) is His glorification.
    - b. Three times Jesus speaks of His being “lifted up” (3: 13-15; 8:28; 12:32). This can mean the act of crucifying; it can also mean exaltation or honoring a person. When He is lifted up, then His true identity will become clear (8:28) and His departure to this heavenly home (12:34-36).
  15. The theme of being “lifted up” is the Johannine theology of the Cross in a nutshell (Kysar page 53). Because, through the Gospel it emphasized that Jesus’ death is the revelation of His identity (8:28). It is

honoring Jesus for who He really is, which is a King going to His coronation. If Jesus seems to be humiliated, it is a humiliation that is part of the process of exaltation. But in truth, the Son of Man cannot be humiliated!! In truth, in John: “the crucifixion and the resurrection are bound together, and cannot be separated.”

16. ***The functions of the Son are the functions of God.*** C.H. Dodd sees a parable of the Sonship of God behind John 5:19-20 as Jesus the son of a carpenter. Again, the ideal of a son watching his father practicing his trade and doing everything that the father is doing (this might make a good Father’s Day sermon). Jesus says in 8:28 that He does only what the Father has taught Him. So much so that the Son is proud of the Father, as the Father is proud of the Son. The Son wants to do only what the Father has taught Him, because He admires and loves the Father. And the Father could have no better Son. As an earthly son shares in the character of the earthly father (for better or worse) so do Jesus and the Father share their character and nature (always for the better).
17. ***The Son carries the full authority of the Father.*** The Father has placed the divine seal on the Son (6:27). This matter of divine authority resting on the Son is probably the meaning of Jesus’ statement in 1:51.
18. ***Therefore, Jesus says: “The Father and I are one” in John 10:30.*** But what does this mean? ***They are “one” but that doesn’t necessarily mean one in every way, does it? No, the Bible says that husband and wife are meant to be one, but does that mean there are no differences. It means that there is a special bond, a closeness and oneness that is marriage; that there is in no other of our relationships.*** But again, there are distinct differences. Look at John 14:28. Jesus Himself even admits that the Father is greater. Greater in what way? You are really talking about the limitations of Jesus, by the fact that God was made flesh. One way is that Jesus couldn’t be everywhere at one time. Another way is in knowledge: only the Father knows when Jesus will return. ***Yet, still another way is as an earthly son obeys his father so does the Son obey the Heavenly Father, an apprentice carpenter only does what the master carpenter tells him to do*** (see 4:34; 14: 31). And just as an earthly son wants to please his earthly father because he loves his father, so does Jesus want to please His heavenly father because He loves Him (vs.31). How do we talk about Jesus and God being the same, being one, but yet Jesus prays to the Father? Is that like praying to Himself? On the subject of the Trinity, do we need to compartmentalize the function of the Trinity in our thinking? Does Paul? Sometimes, but he uses the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit interchangeably.
19. ***The evangelist calls Jesus the “only Son.”*** (3:16) “one of its kind.”
20. ***To respond to Jesus, the Son, is to respond to God, the Father*** (5:23).