



THE PERSON OF CHRIST

LESSON 2

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John's Gospel was the last of the Gospels written. This is not to say that it is the final effort of an aged apostle. Much of the material incorporated in his gospel had, in probability, been long used for teaching purposes in the Church at Ephesus. Even a brief comparison with the other gospels reveals that John's approach to his subject is unique. His gospel gives us the deepest and most intimate portrait of our Lord. As the disciple "whom Jesus loved", his portrayal of the Lord is both sensitive and penetrating.

The key to John's presentation is found in 20:30, 31.

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his Name".

John writes to emphasise the significance of the historical Jesus. Man has a deep spiritual need that only God can meet. To meet this need, God has sent his Son, incarnate (becoming flesh) in Jesus of Nazareth, providing the one real answer to man's needs. The prologue of the gospel – (1:1-18), will repay careful study at this point. The gospel offers God's gift of eternal life to those who believe in the historical Jesus as the expected Christ of the Jews and the divine Son of God. To those who will confess with all sincerity "my Lord and my God" (20:28), this priceless gift of eternal life is given.

"Believing" is basic in John's gospel. He never uses the nouns 'knowledge' or 'faith'; he uses the verbs. He speaks of active believing in Jesus Christ. John also records that belief is growth. One must continually renew his active believing and grow in his commitment to Jesus Christ. We note examples of this growth. In 4:39-42, the Samaritans believed first "because of the woman's testimony", but later their faith increased because of direct relationship to Jesus. The man born blind (ch.9) reveals this progress in faith "a man called Jesus said to me, go and wash" (v.11). Later he calls Jesus a prophet (v.17), and this is finally followed by "Lord, I believe": and he worshipped Him (v.38). A believing based on seeing the signs which Jesus did is of great worth, but there is still more to faith (10:38).

These signs used by Jesus to produce faith in waiting hearts, were signs in words and deeds. In some instances, the signs in words were closely connected to the sign in the act of miracle.

The signs in words include the emphatic declaration "I am". "I am", as used by Jesus, was understood by his hearers as the placing of Himself on the same level as God. In the Old Testament, "I am" was the divine word of God's self-revelation and command: Exodus 3:6, 14, where Moses is met by the Lord and commissioned by Him to lead his people out of Egypt, and Exodus 20:2, the giving of the Ten Commandments. We also find this title "I am" in the prophets: eg; Isaiah 41:12. No wonder the Jews wanted to stone Him: (8:58, 59).

The signs, both in words and works, were selected by John for their significance.

**1. The Signs in Words.**

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Occasion</u>	<u>Signs in Words</u>
4:25, 26	Woman of Samaria “I know that Messiah is coming”	I am He
6:35,48	Feeding 5,000	I am the Bread of Life
8:12	Temple Feast and Lanterns	I am the Light of the World
8:56, 59	Opposition to Pharisees' Pride in their descent from Abraham	Before Abraham was I AM
10:7, 9	Parable of Sheep and Sheepfold	I am the Door
10:11, 14	Parable of Sheep and Sheepfold	I am the Good Shepherd
11:25	Raising of Lazarus	I am the Resurrection and the Life
14:6	With His Own disciples	I am the Way, the Truth and the Life
15:1	With His Own	I am the True Vine

JOHN'S GOSPEL

The Prologue (Introduction of the Gospel 1:1-18) sets the tone of the whole book. Christ is presented as eternal and divine in being. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God". (1:1). In the pre-existent relationship, Christ was the means of creation (1-3). He who was with God and who was God, became flesh (1:14). It was through the incarnation that Jesus revealed God (1:18). We shall study this prologue more closely when we consider the pre-temporal existence of Jesus Christ in a later lesson.

SUMMARY OF THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL PRESENTATION OF JESUS

The teaching of Jesus concerning Himself is of great significance. As a boy, He informed Joseph and Mary of his obligation to his heavenly Father (Luke 2:49). He questioned the disciples concerning their belief in Him (Matt. 16:15), and accepted Peter's reply that He was "the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16). Before his enemies, He used language that indicated both pre-existence and deity (John 8:42, 58; 10:30, 33, 36; Matt.22:41, 45). When believers worshipped Him, He did not demur (John 9:38; 20:28, 29). The indirect implications of his teachings are equally conclusive, for He placed Himself above the law of Moses (Matt.5:21, 22) and claimed authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:9-11). The "I AM" self-designation in John's Gospel also emphasises his Divinity.

His estimate of his own mission is important. He came to preach the gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 4:43), to call sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13), to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), to minister and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He was sent by the Father (John 20:21) and just before his death, He told his Father that He had accomplished His mission (John 17:4). Revelation and redemption had both been committed to Him and He completed both. He predicted, on many



occasions, his death and resurrection (John 2:19; 3:14; 6:51; 12:24; Matt.16:21; Mark 10:33, 34) and also his return in judgement (Matt. 25:31-46).

The many spiritual and ethical topics on which Jesus made pronouncements are too numerous to treat here. One common characteristic of his teaching is worthy of note: they are all based on the assumption that He came to proclaim God's truth; that He had full authority to do so and that He called for men and women to follow Him. He presented Himself as the Son of God and as such, his Word was the final authority.

Question 1:

What was John's purpose in writing his gospel (20:30, 31)? How does 1:1-18 help with this purpose?

Question 2:

In John chapter 9, how do we know the man born blind had an active belief in Jesus and that his belief grew?

Question 3:

"I am" was used several times by Jesus in John's Gospel. What is the significance of this title?

Question 4:

In John 6:35, 48 Jesus said "I am the Bread of Life". What does He mean?

Question 5:

What reasons did Jesus give for coming to Earth?

QUESTION FOR GROUP STUDY

In John 10:7-16, Jesus says. "I am the Door of the Sheep" and "I am the Good Shepherd". What does he mean? What personal significance do these have for you?