



Readings: John 2:1-6; John 1:1-5 & 9-18

John 2:1-6

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'

⁴ 'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.'

⁵ His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from eighty to a hundred and twenty litres.

John 1:9-18

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, 'This is the one I spoke about when I said, "He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me."') ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

1 RECAP – Last week

[What are the water jars doing in John 2 ...? We'll get there today ...]

The eternal pre-existence of Jesus

- with God, was God ...
- Before Abraham was, I am ... (John 8:58)

Jesus the architect and agent of creation

Jesus as light and life ...

They are also key symbols for Jesus, as recorded by John:

'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' John 8:12

'...I am the light of the world.' John 9:5

... 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?' John 11:25-26

'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' John 14:6

THE LIGHT WINS!!

AN EXEGESIS OF John 1: 9-18

4 Jesus as truth: 9-13

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v. 9 'true' = real, genuine, ultimate

contrast with all that is previous, earlier, provisional or anticipatory in the history of God's gracious self-disclosure to humankind

e.g. manna from heaven in the wilderness ... Jesus is the 'true' bread from heaven

³⁰ *So they asked him, 'What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?'* ³¹ *Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."*

³² *Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.* ³³ *For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'*

³⁴ *'Sir,' they said, 'always give us this bread.'*

³⁵ *Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:30-35*

'... everyone ...?'

v. 10-13 make it clear that John is no universalist

'the world' (kosmos), in John's gospel, is universally negative – referring not so much to the physical, created order, but to the human order which is systemically in rebellion against God.

This makes John 3:16 the more extraordinary

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

We've all heard someone say, 'Oh, don't you just love [insert name] ...?'

The implication being – that person is lovable.

John 3:16, in contrast, is not an endorsement of humanity; rather, it's a testimony to God's character of mercy and grace.

vv. 10 & 11 ground the moral responsibility of the human race in the doctrine of creation. The world the Word created does not recognise him, cannot know him, will not receive him.

Poignancy of 'his own home'

Trapped in a house on fire ...

¹⁹ This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. John 3:19-20

The wise, the foolish and the wicked (evil) – Dr Henry Cloud

How we react to the light ...

- The wise welcome the light
- The foolish reject the light
- The evil seek to destroy the light

vv. 12 & 13 Yet to all who received him ...

'His own received him not' could stand as a heading for Chapters 1 – 12 ...

... and 'Yet to all who received him ...' for Chapters 13 – 21

Believed in his **name** – not just label but character ...

'Received' him = trust him completely, acknowledge his claims, confess him with gratitude ...

He gave the right – 'exousia'

Children of God

(distinguishes us from Jesus = only he is 'son'; we are children by adoption)

"All God's children"?

Wm Paul Young, author of *The Shack*, has recently published a non-fiction book, *The Lies we believe about God*. In it he departs from many traditional, orthodox and I would say biblical positions. The following extract from the book and part of an interview with him is revealing:

No one reading and embracing *Lies We Believe About God* will feel a need to repent of his or her sins and trust in Christ for salvation. That is because Young denies we need to do so:

The Good News is not that Jesus has opened up the possibility of salvation and you have been invited to receive Jesus into your life. The Gospel is that Jesus has already included you into his life, into his relationship with God the Father, and into his anointing in the Holy Spirit. The Good News is that Jesus did this without your vote, and whether you believe it or not won't make it any less or more true. (117–18)

Anticipating the charge of universalism, Young lays his cards on the table: "Are you suggesting that everyone is saved? That you believe in universal salvation? That is exactly what I am saying!" (118). Later he is equally explicit: "Every human being you meet . . . is a child of God" (206). Thus, hell isn't separation from God, but simply the pain of resisting the salvation we have and can't escape (137);

and death doesn't result in final judgment but simply introduces "a restorative process intended to free us to run into the arms of Love" (187).

By contrast, Jesus talks of 'new birth' (chapter 3)

Heritage & Race = irrelevant ...

Becoming a child of God takes nothing short of an act of God ...

5 Jesus as incarnate son of God: 14-18

v. 14 shocking language = 'became flesh'

'made his dwelling among us'

lit. tabernacle with us ... pitched tent alongside ours (New Wine!!)

Tent of meeting (Exodus 33)

Moses hears God's Name

Commits God's Word to tablets ...

Now, God's Word, his supreme self-expression, has become flesh.

Not donned ... become

This is the supreme revelation of God

Not even the revelation of the OT can match it ...

¹In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. Hebrews 1:1-2

When the Word became flesh, God became human ...

Here's where the water jars fit in ... their purpose: rites of ritual purification. They represent the endless religious quest for purity and right standing before God, which humanity can never achieve on its own. In Jesus, God says, 'Enough!' 'It is finished!' This was the first sign of who Jesus was because the category in which he will deal once and for all with human sin is as different from the old rituals as wine is from water. He offers not religion but relationship ...

Other teaching which Paul didn't have time to cover in his sermon!

Glory = 'to dwell' is also linked to Hebrew word for the glory of God (shekina) in both the tabernacle and the temple ...

John makes this explicit – 'we have seen his glory'

'doxa' ... Hebrew = 'kabod'

'The visible manifestation of God's self-disclosed presence in a theophany' (Carson)

'One and only' = God's glory, no other ...

'Full of Grace and Truth'

Exodus – God's self-disclosure to Moses: compassion

God's glory is supremely his goodness

⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.' Exodus 34:5-7

Hebrew

- hebed = steadfast love, mercy, covenant love
- met = truth, faithfulness, dependency, consistency

6 Jesus as God revealed

v. 18 no one has seen God (not even Moses), but Jesus has revealed him ...

No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. John 6:46

Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"?' John 14:9

'made him known' = exegesato, from which we get exegesis (explanation of the heart / truth of a text or a word)

Jesus is the exegesis of God

Elsewhere in NT, exegesis = to tell a narrative, to narrate ...

Jesus is the narration of God

CONCLUSION

Jesus is perfect theology ...

'As Jesus gives life and is life, raises the dead and is the resurrection, gives bread and is bread, speaks truth and is the truth, so as he speaks the word he is the Word' (C H Dodd)

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so crucial that we understand that not everyone is automatically a child of God?
2. How do you respond to the light? With wisdom or with folly?
3. What does it mean to believe that Jesus pitches his own tent in the midst of our human journey?
4. Jesus offers not religion but relationship – how can we explain that to friends, family, neighbours, colleagues?
5. How would you expand and explain the phrase, 'Jesus is perfect theology'?

Paul Langham, June 2017