

Chapter 5. “The Gospel of John”

(Some chapters do not have comments, yet. Perhaps that is a good thing.)

In the beginning: It is interesting that the Gospel of John begins with THE REAL BEGINNING. John relates the mission of Jesus to humanity: His words offer us to belong to Him and know our loving God through His Son, Jesus. There are interesting aspects of our Lord’s birth in the other Gospels, however, such as: **The angel, Gabriel**, appeared to Mary for the announcement of what would happen. Joseph got a dream. **The shepherds** got a special announcement when they were busy “watching their flocks by night”. Someone spoke at a local church before Christmas and said that the shepherds were sound asleep and were awakened by the angels. This is false. It clearly states, “they were watching their flocks by night.” Why is it important that that fact would be written down? I believe it may be that they were doing what was required of them as their job. They weren’t shirkers. People can do a lot of important thinking in the dark of night when everyone else is sleeping, and the world is quiet. They certainly were not at some bar, getting drunk. When they looked up, and in those days there weren’t many distractions when one is outside and looking up to the sky, the awesomeness of God is very evident. It is important, also, that there were “shepherds”. Not just one. It is difficult to believe just one person, but when there are two or more, there is a believability regarding an account. Firsthand witnesses are the stronger witnesses.

There were wise men or kings who “saw his star in the east” and came to Jerusalem “to worship him”. By this account I see that all are invited to see and know Jesus: rich and poor, and Jesus got a star! They knelt down and worshipped Him, not anyone else.

He was to be called, “Jesus”. This message was given to Mary and to Joseph on separate occasions. Neither had to stand alone, being recipients of this heavenly declaration. No one had been named, “Jesus”, before Jesus. It is a special name. Both Mary and Joseph had the resolve to continue with their lives with this assignment to take care of Jesus.

Why was there mention of them to be in a stable, “because there was no room for them in the inn”? I think this is important for us to know. First of all, it tells us that they actually considered staying at an inn. If they had been at an inn, the shepherds would not have been welcomed there with all of their sheep, neither would the kings/wise men be comfortable showing up as they were very important people, and I’m sure they would have had their problems with being out in public. Where would the angels proclaim the “glory of God”, also? How could they crowd into a small room at an inn? God’s glory needs an expanse of sky! Would they have stood in the hallway or down below the window of Mary and Joseph, like Christmas Carolers? It is much more glorious to imagine that they all were in a stable. There the angels must have been happy there was no roof, and it must have been quiet and without the clamor of humanity. Jesus would have plenty of that later.

When Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem they had a long journey. Mary was about to give birth. She must have ridden on a donkey as that was the mode of transportation that was common. It is interesting that when Jesus entered Jerusalem he rode a donkey. He wasn't carried on a bier. In both instances, he arrived at a destination of earth-shaking importance to us on a donkey. In the Revelation of John, John writes that he sees Jesus riding a white horse! (Rev.6:1-2), "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, "come and see". And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN:

John 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. What is his name? His name is The Son of God. I believe that. Jesus gives me the power to be a son of God, because I believe he is The Son of God. A son is one who inherits the wealth of the family. Whether we are women or men, girls or boys, as Believers in Our Lord Jesus Christ we are given the power by Jesus to be a son of God. A first-born son inherits everything from his father: all wealth, the home, properties, titles, and all debts to be paid. The debt of sin was Jesus' inheritance as well and must be paid for. Jesus certainly paid this, and we were covered in that payment. Why is Jesus also called the Son of Man? He, also, calls himself this many times. Is it because it is because he inherited everything, even being a sinless son, inheriting the sins of the world, to be the sacrifice for all of mankind? It was a huge debt. We could not repay anything like it, no matter how many hours and years we worked.

John 2:9

When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine and knew not whence it was, but the servants which drew the water knew ...

God let the "servants" in on the secret of how the water became wine. God seems to always give some special advantages to his servants. I can imagine what they could tell their families when they went home that night! As Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have experienced the "understanding of the Scriptures" that the Disciples had during their experience with the Lord on their way to Emmaus. They exclaimed afterward, "how He opened our understanding of the Scriptures". The Lord is very generous to include us in His events.

John 3:2

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night...He was a Pharisee; a ruler of the Jews. Even then the higher-ranking politicians were careful of whom they talked to, or whom they were seen with, and Jesus already had a reputation. Jesus, however, did not bring this up but gave Nicodemus the answers to his questions. How kind Jesus is that he sees beyond our fright and watchfulness

and shows us the perfect way that we should go! He does not keep information from us, but he knows what we are asking before we even ask, or he knows beyond why we are asking it. He doesn't waste any time.

John 4:13-14

At Jacob's well in Samaria Jesus says to the woman: "Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst"... This account in Scripture tells it was about the 6th hour when this woman spoke with Jesus. This is interesting. The 6th day of Creation is when man was created. Jesus was crucified on the 6th day of the week. I do not write this to make a doctrine. It is just something interesting. Thirst is the most immediate thing that is hoped to be quenched when our thirst is life-threatening. It is more desperately needed than satisfying our hunger. We can die of the lack of hydration, and water is the best to alleviate this. What Jesus can give us is life-prolonging hydration. One of the last things Jesus said on the cross was, "I thirst". His body had to die. His suffering for the sins of the whole world included thirsting, and perhaps this was the moment when he was truly separating from his Father, which must have been the most terrible. But this was needed to begin to return to his Father. I am just pondering these things. What I do know is that he suffered for me, and my thirst is quenched in knowing my Savior, and He thirsted, too.

John 5:19

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do, for what things soever he does, these also does the Son likewise." Jesus said, he sees the Father do things, and he does the same. He sees. He didn't say, "but what he saw the Father do..." God chooses words very carefully. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." The Word is Jesus. He is always with the Father even from "the beginning". He walked on earth in the present tense with God.

John 6:

After the 5000 were fed well by the five loaves and two fish, Jesus said to gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost. It is interesting that Jesus did not make a sermon out of the miracle that 5000 had been fed. There were even left-overs that could be saved. He didn't say in a very loud voice, "Do you see what has been done here?" He didn't stand up behind a podium to continue yelling about the miracle! He had given thanks and then distributed to the disciples who gave to the ones who were seated. No one wrote a song about this that had happened, and there was no revival meeting either. No church was formed and no offering was taken. Jesus departed from them when he felt they were "going to take him by force", and he went to a mountain alone. This is the message: the miracle not only served a practical purpose, but also for some of them, they saw and believed in the Son of God. Jesus even divided those that followed him by saying that some of them came to him because they were

fed, not because of the miracles. How long do we remember the “miracles”? A miracle is anything that has happened that is good and we didn’t do. On a much lesser note: how often do we thank our mothers for the food they prepare and set out for us? Or our fathers for whatever they have done. And when do we thank God?

John 7:37

Jesus said, “If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.” Jesus said on the cross, “I thirst.” Because he was leaving this world, perhaps he felt the very heavy weight of that crown of thorns, bearing the sins of the whole world. His next words were, “It is finished.” His sacrifice was finished.

John 8

Jesus said he is the light of the world. Whoever follows him shall not walk in darkness. – when you have lifted up the Son of Man. Was the crucifixion when he was lifted up? He spoke of it as being once. He did not say, “when you continue to lift me up.” His “lifting up” was to show He is the Son of God and needed to be done only once, and what He said was done.

John 10

“I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again. I lay down my life.” He said, “No man takes it from me.” He has the power to lay it down and to take it up again. He said he received this of His Father. No one killed Jesus. He commanded his death, when he would die, and it is written that way.

John 11

Lazarus is in the grave 4 days not 3, so as not to let us mix up the Resurrection of Jesus with the healing of Lazarus. Jesus said, “Lazarus, come forth.” When Jesus raises you, you can stand up and walk! Jesus did not need many words. There was only this command. That was enough. Jesus said to Mary, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” First is the Resurrection and then the Life.

John 12:32

Jesus said, “If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to me.” Isn’t the cross our symbol of his sacrifice for us? Didn’t they nail him onto the cross which was laying on the ground, and then didn’t they lift him up? He spoke of himself being the vine. Vines are staked up, so their fruit will not be soiled, laying in the earth.

John 13

Peter denied Him, not betrayed him. Only Judas betrayed him.

John 14

The way, the direction. The truth: His words. The life, for eternity.

John 15

Grape vines get staked up. The fruit stays clean – and gets life from the vine. Without being on the vine, the fruit dies and falls to the ground and rots. Jesus was staked up on the cross.

John 16:33

While Jesus knew what would happen, he still comforted the disciples. He told them, “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

John 17. Jesus talks to his Father. Someone had to be there to hear it and write it down. This is God’s provision for us to know this intimate detail. The person to write it down must have been John as this appears in his Gospel. There is no amen at the end. It is what Jesus said to His Father. There is no need for an “amen” as amen means “so be it” or “let it be”, which implies there is hope for the words meaning something in the near future, like a request. This was not a request – this was talking to His Father. And furthermore, Jesus knew His Father was listening. Jesus’ requests included asking that the disciples would be with him where he would be, and that they would be kept from the evil of the world. He asked for them to be “one” as he was “one” with his Father. He also requested that those who would believe in the future would be “one” with him as well. That’s us. Jesus prayed for us.

John 18

Remember when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and questioned him? In this chapter Judas has his protection, coming to arrest Jesus with a band of officers from the chief priests and scribes. They also had little courage. Every knee shall bow. They not only bowed, they fell back and collapsed on the ground when Jesus asked, “Whom do you seek?” They said, “Jesus of Nazareth”. Jesus said, “I am he.”

John 19

While Jesus is dying on the cross, the guards come to break the legs of the ones who are crucified, so that they would die faster. They don’t break Jesus’ legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side. What made him do that? How could anyone want to make someone who is dying a terrible death on a cross suffer even more?

John 20

Mary was distraught when she did not find the body of Jesus at the tomb. She was thinking about what can she do to fix this, and that is why she said what she did to Whom she thought was the gardener. He did not respond with any explanations. He only said her name. It is a very huge miracle when Jesus says our name. Of course, we do not hear it, audibly, as we would certainly drop dead. There are accounts of what God said in Genesis, and to the prophets as to what they should do, and of Jesus how He spoke and healed and prayed. We know when Jesus is “speaking” to us. Someday we will hear Him speak our names, one at a time, perhaps, and we can say as Believers, “Lord here I am. Thank you.” Mary only recognized Jesus when he said her name.

John 21

The disciples were in the boat on the Sea of Tiberius after Jesus was crucified. They were distraught – angry. Jesus was killed, and they had caught no fish. A man on the shore whom they can't recognize questions them about their catch. The man on the shore, however, has a solution for them to catch some fish. Oddly, they take his advice and they follow his suggestions. Why? They were desperate and maybe hungry. John says, "It is the Lord!" Soon they catch so many they can't load them all into the boat. Jesus says to Peter, "Feed my sheep." Think back to when God was speaking to Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses had some hesitations. God never explained anything, He just told Moses the next plan. When we do what God is telling us to do, and we do it, we don't need an explanation of why He wants us to do it. The plan explains itself in the outcome. It is called, "faith". One more thought: Moses was told to stretch his arm over the water, and it would be divided, therefore making a way for the Israelites to be saved. Moses extended his "outstretched arm". Jesus outstretched two arms to save us.

The reader may be interested in the Scripture and Symphonies cd of the Brahms Hungarian Dances: The Gospel of John. The recording is also on the website as a free audio download. To God be the Glory.