

Notes on The Gospel According to John

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Significance of **WORD**

This chapter really demonstrates the triune nature of the God-head. The references to God the Father, God the Son who came in flesh as Jesus Christ as our Messiah according to the Scriptures and The Holy Spirit of God can all be found demonstrating the unique synthesis of the meaning of the Trinity.

John's Gospel is unique in the aspect that we see a direct response to the various gnostic claims people were making at the time and how to dispel and fight against all of them through this writing. Since all scriptures are good and beneficial [2Tim 3:16], this can be used to this day to combat various forms of returning heresies or questions from the world around us - either from the Watchtower folks or from smart educated ivory tower philosophers. What is new is old repackaged. The apostles fought against this in early church and John's Gospel starts that followed by various writings of Paul.

Gnosticism had started to spread in the 1st century AD with influences of hellenistic and babylonian ideas seeping into the church, questioning the various aspects of the human-ness and the diety of Jesus Christ. The primary ones were the following

- Manichaeism and Mandaism which are dualistic in nature and comes from and has influenced both east and west. It even let to a sect later to become Sabians who followed only John the Baptist.
- Sabelians viewed God as three different modes and not as distinct persons, thereby coming up with all sorts of mental gymnastics around modalities
- Docetism taught that Jesus' personhood was not reality, which in some forms was used in Quran when they believe in Jesus as a prophet of God, but deny He actually died and rose from the dead.
- Ariansim, in which Jesus is subordinate to God, not just positionally as we believe, but because He came after God. This is seen in various myths from JW and Mormonism

- Nestorianism takes dualism to Christ and distinctly separates out His human self from His diety.

There were also divergence in Greek philosphy with platonic thought deeming metaphysical and non-real things as higher than real and physical things, while the aristotelian thought that gave value and meaning to physical things.

Why is all of this relevant? If I dont believe Jesus is God and was sent as His Son to live amongst us as a man and to die for my sins, all of which happened according to Scriptures (starting with Genesis 3 to 15 to various prophecies in OT), then I dont believe in the true Jesus Christ of the Holy Bible.

All it takes is to hit at the core of the personhood or diety of my Lord Jesus, by introducing what looks like well reasoned arguments, that sow the doubts and leads us to path of darkness away from the Light. This is the deception techniques the enemy has used since the first century.

Hence to address the nature of the God-head, John starts from the beginning even before Genesis, before time actually started as we know it when God created it, there was *the* Word. Using the word *Logos* translated to *expression of a thought*, he accomplished few things:

1. He used an immaterial or metaphysical word to denote Jesus relating to both how God spoke the universe into existence from Genesis 1 to the platonic scholars who believed in the metaphysical origin.
2. He turned around and brought the metaphysical to real/physical by stating the Word became flesh to live (tabernacle) among the world
3. The Word existed before Genesis and was part of the God-head.
4. This physical being of a Man, called Son of Man referncing back to OT, was real as testified by the eye witnesses, starting with John the Baptist.

In addition to John1, this word WORD (logos) comes to mean few things -

- statement [Jn19:8, Acts6:5, Lk20:20]
- account [Acts1:1]
- message [Acts4:4, Lk4:36]
- reason [Acts10:29]
- matter [Acts8:21]
- report [Lk7:17]
- news [Lk5:15]

There is also a strong Jewish and Rabbinical influence, where the concept of *mamreh* or its original use *imrah* [Gen4:23, Deu32:2, Deu33:9] are God's speech and His Word. This talmudic concept of mamreh comes out in this first chapter where all its attributes are attributed now to our Lord Jesus.

John the Baptist

John the Baptist was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. [Lk1:11-17] talks about how Gabriel came to Zacharias when he was in the temple and told him about John, using [Mal4:6], being filled with the spirit of Elijah. He was also Jesus' cousin and arrived in earthly form half year before Jesus was born. [Lk1:41] [Dan2:44] prophesied about how God will setup a kingdom that will never be destroyed and will endure forever. He came in the spirit of Elijah as called in [Isa40:3] when God spoke of a voice crying in the wilderness making ready the way of the Lord. His job was that of a messenger of God, to call the nation of Israel to repentance and to purify them in anticipation of the Messiah.

Josephus referenced him in his writings as the *wild man*. He also talked about his death, where John was beheaded by Herod Antipas when John chided him for adultery. The Jews at that time believed that Herod's army was destroyed as a sign of God's punishment on account of John's death (Antiquities XVIII 5:2)

The significance of the phrase *one and only* in [Jhn1:14]

The word used *monogenes* means sole descendent, only child (no other child but this), unique one and one of a kind. Its used in the secular Hesoid's early writings to mean unique one. This was meant to signify that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God [John 3:16] and that there was no other. Simon bar Kokhba later would come and claim the sonship within the first century, decades after the resurrection of our Lord.

In OT there are references to son of man and Son of God. [Dan3:25] references the latter, while Psalms and Ezekial has several references to former. In [Mat4:3-6] Satan uses Son of God, as he addresses Jesus during the temptation narrative. Even the deamons in [Mat8:29] refer to Him as such. This establishes the Sonship. The reference to *one & only* further qualifies Jesus is The Son of God.

Religious leaders interrogate John

The Sanhedrin (literally seated together) was a Jewish council of 71 men. They were referred to as the council of the elders in the Bible. They sent two rounds of investigation for any Messianic claims. When they heard John the Baptist was baptizing and calling people to repentance, they wanted to know

- under whose authority was he baptizing people
- they wanted to know if he was the Messiah or had the revelation of the Messiah as it said in [Mal 4:5] that Lord will send Elijah before the coming

of the great and dreadful day. Even to this day, Jewish families leave an empty chair for Elijah during their Pesach Seder.

- they were worried about their own position and authority.

Baptism background

Purification by water has been a type since Genesis. From Noah's deliverance from the flood [1Pe3:20-21] to [Lev13,8:6] when water was used to purify before entering the Temple, there has been a special place for being purified by water ceremonially.

[Eze36:25-27]

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

The OT word used is *taval* or *tevila* seen in Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers etc. The Hebrew word *miqvot* (singular *mikveh*) is seen in Dead Sea Scrolls and seemed to have been a practice of the Essene sect of Pharisees, in essence ceremonially purification akin to baptism.

Jesus is the Lamb of God

The first reference occurs in [Gen22:8] when Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." This sacrificial Lamb true to God's covenant in [Gen 15:17] was provided for by God Himself in [Gen22:13].

This was a foreshadow of the Pesach lamb that delivered Moses and Israelites out of Egypt, which was used to symbolize our deliverance from the world of sin and bondage.

[Isa53:4-10] talks of the suffering servant, equated to Hamasiach ben Joseph, where He is our guilt offering, lead like a lamb to take on the wrath of God, so His death will justify the many. This was a clear prophecy of the coming of Christ Jesus and the early promises of God.

Revelation 14,15,19,21 & 22 make it clear that the judgement will occur in front of THE LAMB. The same Lamb that was chosen to take on our sins.

Disciples following Rabbi

Both Greeks and Jewish teachers had some sort of following, where once they selected a student, the students followed the teacher. Apollonius of Tyana did that in 1st century as did Pythagoras of Samoa 500 years earlier.

Hence it was common for students to seek after teachers and follow them (literally and virtually). What is unique is that, Jesus calls them to follow Him. This reversal demonstrates God always initiates the relationship with us, harking back to [Eph2:1-9]

Simon & Andrew following Jesus

Therefore it was almost an honor for a great Rabbi to invite you to join Him. In this case, its even more amazing/unique as both Simon and Andrew were fishermen. The typical case for studentship belonged to Levites, Pharisees and people of whitecollar upbringing.

As the entire nation of Israel had been waiting for the Mesiach. [Deu18:15] Moses propesied Lord God will raise a prophet like me..[Deu32:43] states rejoice for coming salvation, from whence [Heb1:6] infers Christ.

Hence it made only sense when they heard a reputed teacher like John the Baptist, call Jesus the Son of God and the Lamb of God, that they would follow Jesus.

Nathaneal's comment on Nazareth

Nathaneal means given of God. Nazareth was a small town, not mentioned in OT. Secular sources say it might have been a Roman garrison for the entire northern area of Galilee. These two reasons might be why Nathaneal exclaims that.

[Mat2:23] says, This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene.", even though there is no direct prophecy concerning Nazarene. The play on words here is that Matt is harkening to [Isa11:1] 'from (Jesse's) roots a Branch (netzer) will bear fruit'. The word play is the hebraic call to attention, equivalent to an emphasis or boldening of font.

[Isa9:1] mentions that the land of Naphtali and Zebulun will be made glorious. That the people will see the great light. This was quoted in [Mat 4:13] that leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon on the sea coast in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali.

These two statements, re-emphasizes that God's plan was set before the foundations of the world and even if we dont see prominence in the stature of a man or a city in our current day, what is in God's will, will come to pass.

Throwback to Jacob

[Jn1:51] references Jesus saying "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.". This is the same vision Jacob had on his way to Paddan-aram, his uncle Laban's house, where he slept on a rock and dreamt... [Gen28:12]

He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

Following this in [Gen28:13] is the proclamation when LORD stood above and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac;" and the promises [Gen28:14-15]

Summary

This chapter of John's Gospel proves the following -

- Jesus is the Son of God [Jn1:14, Jn1:34]
- Jesus is God [Jn1:51 via Gen28:13] and [Jn1:1]
- Jesus lived among men as a man [Jn1:14]
- Jesus is the Messiah [Jn1:41]
- Jesus is the Lamb of God [Jn1:36]
- all the angels and heavenly being bow down to Him [Jn1:51]