

Teachers background notes from Pastor Del: “why are we studying the book of John”.

These are my notations that helped inform me while preparing for this study before and after writing the lesson the manuscript. I am hoping that these notes that include a progression from old to new testament references and explanations will help broaden your understanding of our end goal for this study. If you have more questions following your review of these notes do not hesitate to ask.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 reveals that God put “world” (*eternity*) in our hearts “so that no man can find out the beginning and end of God’s work”. Solomon argues in these writings that man’s work (travail) is futile; the work of man never ends and never leads to the **beginning** of understanding God’s work in man. Why did God create man and give him an existence in a world that cannot satisfy his craving for the eternal?

Searching for answers about life and purpose under the heavens reduces the answers and truth to the limits of this world without considering the world above the heavens. Looking for the “**beginning**” in a world that was created is short-sighted. We should be looking beyond the work of creation under the heavens directly to the creator. Our affections (active desires) should be set not on the things in this world but upon the world above. (Colossians 3:1-2)

We are conditioned to over-look the world that over-looks us failing to see the greater truth that is always present. Jesus was present in a world that over-looked Him and intentionally rejected Him. His litany in the infamous sixth chapter of John’s Gospel could arguably be the most controversial declaration made by the Son of God. Following the great miracle of feeding the crowd of five thousand souls, John the author of the Gospel captures an addendum not mentioned anywhere else in the Gospels. It is apparent that the fed souls were content with the minor miracle eating bread and fish to sustain their physical needs. In contrast they were completely ignorant or ambivalent the greater miracle. They missed the identity of the creator because they were content with the work of creation. In exchange for temporal bread they missed the opportunity to feast on the bread of life. (John 6:48) The discourse of Jesus includes a reference to the manna that the forefathers ate in the wilderness. They ate to their fill, but the manna did not give them life forever. Jesus delivers the now controversial declaration, paraphrased here: “except you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood...you have no life in you”. (John 6:53-56)

The declaration, without context appears cannibalistic. Jesus directly demanding that men eat, consume, and devour His flesh. The truth lies beneath the mystery. The author of the gospel is dedicated to presenting the Jesus as son of God and God, emphasizing His deity for the sole purpose of illustrating God’s commitment to demonstrate His love for His creation to live among them, become one with them allowing the eternal gift of God (life) to become flesh.

Jesus is not advocating cannibalism He is offering the opportunity for men to fully consume and digest the gift of life is Him. He is the way, the truth and the life. He has come that we might have life and have life more abundantly; life that will not end. (everlasting, eternal life)

Many followers that were not disciples walked away after hearing this declaration and Jesus turned to those that remained and asked if they would turn away. Peter for the true disciples and says: "to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)

The Study of John's' gospel will teach us that the word of God became flesh to give us access to eternal life now, not at some distant point in the future. Man needs life now and must make the choice for life now. John the author has gifted insight to the eternal nature and deity of the son of God. He is the same author of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to him while exiled on the isle of Patmos. The Revelation is the last writing to the early Church, intended to help secure the faith of believers challenged by the time lapse in waiting for the return of Jesus. John is commissioned to write his revelation of the enthroned son of God as a testimony of His victory over the enemies of God and His kingdom already celebrated in eternity. The victory in eternity is assurance that the promise of God providing a place in His kingdom for His people is certain and will be fulfilled.

John the author writes about John the Baptist, the prophet ordained as the forerunner and witness of the Messiah. John the prophet has the task of identifying the Messiah, to his generation. The prophet has pre-cursor event the John the author captures in detail noting that when cousins with child encounter each other the prophet leaped in the while in the womb acknowledge the presence of the messiah child. This pre-event noted by John the author was certainly offered to provide a balance in perspective because the prophet would later question the very identity of the messiah him affirm before his birth. This notation reinforces the need for John's gospel, because of the doubt that could consume even those that witnessed the Jesus the Messiah during His tenure on earth. John the author is the reliant, consistent voice to affirm the true identity of Jesus as man and God.

The other gospels present mans need to become one with God as John presents dual perspective including the need for man to become one with God but adding with emphasis God becoming one with man.

The other gospels focus largely on Christ work on earth as John places emphasis on the work of Christ before coming to earth.

The other gospels portray Christ as a parabolic teacher, using metaphors and references of common life experiences to help illustrate greater divine principles of truth; John adds to the parabolic teacher the emphatic, unequivocal “words of God” the teacher making Himself the object and metaphor; something not from this world but from the world above/before this world – **I am The Bread, Water, The Door, True Vine, Good Shepherd, The way, The truth, The Life, the Divine Son of God**

The study of this gospel is intended to advance the reader/student from general encounter and awareness of God to becoming one with God. When Christ is fully revealed and presented to us, in His fullness, He will also require us to eat His flesh; challenging us to fully consume and digest the truth about Him. The end goal of this study should provoke us to acknowledge that we can only find life in Him, there are no alternatives or substitutions. God created us to discover that our craving for life can only be satisfied by Him. The beginning of understanding God’s work in us begins with the “Word”, -the Word of Life!