



All notes and recorded sessions are available at the Church WWW site



John 1-5

REVIEW

- “In the beginning...” God brought a first creation into existence by His Word. Now, through the Word made flesh, God is bringing about a new creation populated by God’s offspring who are alive in the full sense, and who truly see (because they believe) but who cannot be seen by the present world (like wind/spirit).
- John the Witnesser first identified Jesus as God’s Lamb who would remove that which keeps the world from being fully alive by being born from above/in the Spirit. John’s word and work is complete (Jn 3).
- Jesus’ disciples (along with other deserving and undeserving learners) “abide” with Jesus and begin to un-learn what seems true in this world but is not and to learn what is true
 - Un-learning political aspirations for Israel, the power of physical media (like water, the Temple) to purify, family and kin as goals in life, that Jesus is only a man sent by God, ethnic differences as being important to God, days and seasons (Sabbath) as “time-off” from the work of God
 - Learning (by catching glimpses of the truth in Jesus) that as with the first creation so with the new creation the Word speaks and “new” things happen: water becomes wine, people are healed, ...
 - The main thing that they have to learn is that the Word is the Father’s Word .(The Word become flesh only says and does what the Father says and does, Jn 5.) Therefore, hearing the Word is to hear and see the Father which only God’s offspring can do ... by believing.
- Finally, we are reminded (in Jn 5) that this same Word in the flesh was and always is on trial by the “world” and that He will be found “guilty” in the eyes of that first-creation world that thinks that it sees. However, that trial is in truth a trial OF that world and its blindness which is its sin (because it goes by the name of “sight”). The truth is known not by those who see but those who believe. Thus, the witnesses called by Jesus in John 5 are intended to show not only Jesus as “innocent” (the lamb of God) but also the world as guilty... they are not intended, however, to get Jesus freed since His death will be where the offspring see in truth because they will only be able to see by believing. ... that the Lamb of God takes away death (the world’s blindness) by death... His own death.

QUESTIONS?

John 6

I. THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

II. JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

III. THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:1-14

THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

FEEDING

- The setting
 - Explanation of the name of the sea (probably for those not familiar with it)
 - The crowd is of those who have seen “signs” (glimpses of the divine)
 - Went up the mount (cf. the setting for the Sermon on Mount (Matt 5:1-2))
 - Passover



FEEDING

- The only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four Gospels (very similar wording even)
- Differences
 - Roles of Philip and Andrew (primary disciples since the beginning)
 - Use of words found in early church practice of Lord's Supper
 - Jesus "gave thanks" (*eucharist...*)
 - Jesus' command to gather up remnants
- The result (6:14-15) This "sign" causes people to think that Jesus is the new Moses (like Moses who gave the people bread in the wilderness), i.e., "The prophet who is to come"

Deut 18:15: Moses said "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren -- him you shall heed --"

John 6:15-21

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

WALKING ON THE SEA

- This miracle is found in all of the Gospels, except for Luke
 - It is most like Mark (In Matthew, Peter gets out of the boat to walk on the sea)
- John's emphasis
 - Darkness (vs. 17)
 - "I AM" (vs. 20): Not "It is I". Why?
 - Jesus never gets into the boat ("They wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat came to be at the land to which they were going") Why?

John 6:22-71

THE BREAD OF LIFE

BREAD FROM HEAVEN / BREAD OF LIFE

- Another conversation (cf. Nicodemus, Samaritan woman) in which Jesus helps people un-learn and learn
 - Un-learn that what sustains (nourishes) the creation has any enduring value
 - Learn that what sustains (nourishes) the new creation is the Word
- The people are puzzled how Jesus got to the other side without a boat, but as with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman Jesus brings them to the real issue: "You are after the bread that physically nourished you and you think that I am a kind of new Moses who will provide for you"
 - The result is get to the people on to the right track: What should we be doing to be nourished in truth?
 - Jesus' answer: Do God's work, which is to believe in the one God has sent... then you will live!

THE BREAD OF LIFE

- The Jews here at Passover ask of Jesus something similar to the Samaritan woman
 - Give us this running water / everlasting bread (Is this an echo of the Lord's Prayer?)
- Jesus reveals himself (as he had to the Samaritan woman: I AM is the one speaking to you)
 - "I AM is the bread of life" = the one who truly nourishes
 - Jesus is more than Jacob (Jn 4)
 - Jesus is also more than Moses who gave the people bread in the wilderness (because the people still died after eating that bread)
 - Jesus is the Word become flesh, the same Word who met Moses and made His name known to Moses! The same Word at whose feet Jacob lay in sleep and saw a ladder going up to Him, on which angels ascended and descended.

BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS BREAD OF LIFE?

- In contrast to the manna of Moses, Jesus gives his own flesh and blood as the drink for the offspring of God that will truly nourish them
 - A very difficult saying! (vs. 52, 60)
- But... what REALLY gives life?
 - "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (vs. 63)
- But, then, what about the flesh and blood?
 - Symbolized in the Church's Eucharist, a twofold symbol:
 - In terms of this world: the body which is passing away and must pass away for the new body to appear
 - In terms of the world to come: the need for a new body that can never pass away and that is being nourished by the Word to live in a new creation!

PETER'S RESPONSE (AND JUDAS' RESPONSE)

- When asked by Jesus whether this saying is too hard for those who are abiding with Jesus and learning from him, Peter responds (vss. 67-69):
 - No other person has words that give life: only Jesus speaks Words that really enliven
 - We have not just seen; we have believed (and thus truly seen!)
 - You are not just the political Messiah that we expected but you are something more: "God's Holy One".
 - Sounds correct.
 - Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34: The confession of the demons!
 - James 2:19: : "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe -- and shudder." Demons know the truth – see truly – even though they may not be saved. They know, like Peter, what "the world" and "his own" do not.
 - Judas does not betray Jesus because he doesn't understand him. According to John, Judas knows exactly who Jesus is! (Greek : "and one of you is the devil".)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- From what you know from previous chapters of John, there are two different kinds of people in this world: (1) people who think they see (but who really don't) and (2) people who truly see (but aren't known by this world). But, from John 6 we learn that there are also two different kinds of people who truly see ("believe"): (2a) people who know the truth and "do" it (Jesus and those who do the will of the Father in order to live) and (2b) people who know the truth and want to hide it or destroy it (demons, devil, Judas... and those with whom Judas is in league, namely ?). So, it turns out that you can't be saved without "believing" (1) but "believing" (truly seeing) alone is not adequate (2b). Why?
- How is the image of Jesus walking on the water consistent with what you have already seen Jesus say about the nature of God's offspring?
- Can you identify the numerous places in John 1-6 where we find echoes of the name of God from Exodus 3:14? What have you started to conclude from these echoes?
- According to John, what does Jesus give to the true people of God (God's offspring) to eat and so to live?