

The Gospel of John

Week 3

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OUTLINE

Healings

The Signs

Actual Events

Confrontations with Pharisees

Jesus' 'I am' Statements

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AUTHORITY OF SIGNS

The expression 'sign' is used in an unusual way in John. In the other gospels it tends to get used negatively (people demand signs.) In John it is tied to belief positively:

- 2:11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.
- 2:23 ... many believed in His name, observing His signs...
- 3:2 "no one can do these signs ... unless God is with him"
- 6:2 A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs
- 6:14 ... when the people saw the sign ... they said, "This is truly the Prophet ..."
- 12:18 ... the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.
- 20:30 ... many other signs Jesus also performed...

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

In light of the roll that these signs play, it is worth noting the way that his healings (4 of 7 signs) increase in intensity:

1. *Transforms water into wine*
2. *Heals a child from some illness, "at the point of death" (4:46ff)
3. *Heals Invalid(?): 38-year illness, too weak to get into a pool, laying on his mat (5:1-9)
4. *Feeding of 5000*
5. *Walks on water*
6. *Gives sight to man born blind (9:1-12)
7. *Raises Lazarus from the dead (11:38-46)

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Not only are the healings more intense but the response is more dramatic.

Condition	Length	Response	
Sick Child		Family Believed	4:53
38 Year Invalid	5:1-47	Persecution	5:16
		Threat of murder	5:18
Congenital Blindness	9:1-10:39	Polarization	9:16
		Ostracization	9:34
		Threat of murder	10:34
Death	11:1-12:50	Full Conspiracy	11:47ff
		Mary's Anointing	12:3
		Audience of Greeks	12:20-22
		Some Rulers Believe	12:42,3

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WHAT DOES JESUS DO

By what means does Jesus heal? Why?

Event	Jesus' Action	Point?
Sick Child	Never Met Child	Belief
38 Year Invalid	Ordered to Carry Mat	Confrontation
Congenital Blindness	Made Mud	Confrontation
Death	Ordered Lazarus to Exit	Belief

Note that in the majority all his signs, he simply speaks. What can we learn from this?

WHAT DOES JESUS DO

What can we learn from Jesus' frequent use of words only?

- ▶ Simply in terms of action, it shows that Jesus doesn't need to touch things or perform magical ceremonies.
- ▶ Bearing the prologue in mind, one might speculate that John is highlighting the power of Jesus' *words*.
- ▶ Miracles generally lend authority to a messenger's words—how much more if the miracles are by the same mouth!

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RELEVANT RABBINIC TEACHING

As suggested above, Jesus seems to be deliberately trying to stir up trouble with the Pharisees. Given the fact that the Sabbath features heavily, consider these strictures:

*The principal Melakhot [labor/activity] is forty minus one: Sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, sorting, grinding, sifting, **kneading**, baking, shearing wool, whitening it, combing it, dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying [a knot], untying [a knot], sewing two stitches, tearing for the purpose of sewing two stitches, hunting a deer, slaughtering it, skinning it, salting it, curing its hide, scraping it, cutting it, writing two letters, erasing for the purpose of writing two letters, building, demolishing, extinguishing a flame, lighting a flame, striking with a hammer, **carrying from one domain to another**. (Mishnah, Shabbat 7:2)*

RELEVANT RABBINIC TEACHING

Here are some relevant facts from Rabbinic teaching that shed light on these episodes:

1. Jesus' Instructions and Sabbath:

- ▶ "Carrying from one domain to another" is forbidden.
- ▶ 5:10—So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."

2. Jesus' Healing Techniques

- ▶ "Kneading is forbidden"
- ▶ "It is forbidden to apply saliva . . . to one's eyelids."
- ▶ "[One] may anoint himself with root oil but *not for medicinal purposes*"
- ▶ 9:16—Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

RELEVANT RABBINIC TEACHING

Relevant facts from Rabbinic teaching (continued):

3. Congenital defects were a signal of sin:

- a. 9:2—"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"
- b. 9:34—They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.
- c. Confused interpretations of the OT result in a theology where there's "no suffering without guilt" (Carson, 361):
 - ▶ Ex 23:25—*But you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst.*
 - ▶ Deut 7:15—*The Lord will remove from you all sickness*
 - ▶ What about the rebuke of Job's friends for arguing exactly this point? (Job 42:8; Cf. Luke 13:1-5)

AUTHORITY

Jesus makes claims of authority throughout the book. The early statement from the Pharisees probably raises the question it both in a local (temple clearing) and general way (Jesus' ministry):

The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"

Jesus offers these as witnesses to Him:

- ▶ John the Baptist (5:33)
- ▶ Miracles, signs, "works" (5:36)
- ▶ The Father (5:37)
- ▶ Scripture (5:39)

How do these lend credence to him?

AUTHORITY

How do these lend credence to him?

- ▶ *John the Baptist*—John was clearly accepted as a prophet, was granted the Spirit at birth, and links himself to the office of forerunner of Messiah
- ▶ *Miracles*—Clearly show extraordinary, supernatural authority
- ▶ *The Father*—(Not as obvious) Baptism? His authorizing the miracles?
- ▶ *Scripture*—Prophecies (BLIND SEE! Isaiah 35:5!)

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Jesus uses the greek phrase *ego eimi* in several special ways in John:

1. *Predicative*—I am the Bread of Life (6:35)
2. *Implied Predicative*—Cf. In English, “Are you the teacher?” “Yeah, I am.” (e.g. in 9:9, the blind man uses *ego eimi* to quickly indicate that he’s the blind guy.)
3. *Categorical*—I am with no attached predicate implied or otherwise. It’s at least a peculiar statement of existence, but is most likely a powerful reference to the OT.

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GATE AND SHEPHERD

Jesus says the following:

10:9-11—I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

How could he be both the gate (door) and the shepherd? What does he mean?

- ▶ Anyone can vary a metaphor as they like, especially if they are the one's crafting it!
- ▶ Recall from last week the shepherd imagery is linked to Davidic messiah (Psalm 78: 70-72; Eze 34:23, 37:24)
- ▶ Fits well with the idea that "the Word was with God and the Word was God." In other words, he's the way to God (Father, God-head) and he is also himself God (Logos, Son)

VISION AND LIGHT

As we saw foreshadowed in the prologue, Jesus uses the imagery of vision and light throughout:

- ▶ John 3:20,1– For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.
- ▶ 8:12–Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” (Most likely during candle lighting ceremony of Feast of Tabernacles)
- ▶ 9:5–While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world. (Before healing a blind man)
- ▶ 12:45,6–“He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. ”

VISION AND LIGHT

Jesus remarks after healing Blind Man,

John 9:39-41—And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

What does Jesus mean by blindness/sight?

- ▶ Apparent sight (true blindness) = advanced learning, self-righteous confidence
- ▶ True sight (apparent blindness) = heart of repentance, dependence on God through Christ
- ▶ Some are also apparently blind and truly blind... Note Matt 15:14—“Let them [Pharisees] alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

OTHER PREDICATIVE STATEMENTS

Given limitations of time we cannot examine all of these statements. Here are some others over which we will pass:

1. The resurrection and the life (11:25)
2. The way, the truth and the life (14:6)
3. The true vine (15:1,5)

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WHO IS JESUS?

God identifies Himself to Moses as the I AM:

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Here are a few examples where Jesus might be signaling that he is the I AM, translated in most English bibles as LORD:

- ▶ 8:24—"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins."
- ▶ 8:28—"When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am ..."

I AM WHO I AM

There is one section where it is nearly indisputable that Jesus is identifying himself with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the burning bush (Ex 3:6)

John 8:56ff—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Not only is Jesus claiming pre-existence (cf. John 1:1) but that he is God!

A PUZZLE FOR JESUS' DIVINITY

How would you solve these puzzling remarks?

1. *Omnipresence*—The doctrine of the kenosis is central to all answers: Jesus voluntarily chose not to draw on his divine attributes. Phil 2:7—he made himself nothing [emptied Himself] by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
2. *Omniscience*—
 - ▶ The Kenosis is definitely the best answer here too.
 - ▶ Note that Jesus says “Only the father.” Perhaps certain attributes of the Godhead are enjoyed collectively rather than distributively. That being said, I recommend exercising *extreme* caution in making distinctions among members of the trinity.
3. *Omnipotence*—After His resurrection his divinity is much more clear. Matt 28:18—Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”

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