

Thoughts in John's Gospel

Part 1

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| Speaker | Norman Anderson |
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] John 1 verse 14. We beheld his glory. As occupying ourselves with such a theme, we are in very good company. The psalmist had said, my meditation of him shall be sweet. Psalm 104 verse 34. The remnant of Malachi's day were distinguished in the Spirit's record as being those that feared the Lord and thought upon his name. The remnant of early incarnation days had an honour who spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Second of Luke verse 38. What a blessed occupation. The two disciples of John 1 inquired, Teacher, where abidest thou? How [00:01:04] blessed to be taught by him. How much more so to abide with him. We thank God for the example of disciples who said to him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. John 6 verse 68. We remember too the woman of Samaria who declared, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ? Or the man of John 9 who exclaimed in answer to the question, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? Then too we have the Greeks of John 12 who said to Philip, Sir, we would see Jesus. Listen to the [00:02:02] words of the converted Pharisee. Philippians 3 verse 10. But I may know him. Let us join the exile of Patmos, who, as he contemplated the firstborn from among the dead, as prince of the kings of the earth, burst forth into praise, crying unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Revelation 1 verse 5. How can to the question asked of the hypocritical Pharisees, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? Matthew 22 verse 42. Let us take this question to ourselves and answer with Peter in the language [00:03:02] of Matthew 16 verse 16. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. In such a spirit we would enter the pages of John's gospel. Let us remember that this gospel was written towards the close of the first century of the assembly's history. Can we imagine almost 60 years without John's gospel? Does it matter whether we accept this presentation of our Lord or not? Such a question is answered in 1st John 4 verse 6. We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us. Also the solemn word in his second epistle verse 9. Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God. He [00:04:03] that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone come to you and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and greet him not. For he who greets him partakes of his wicked works. How can a man bring the doctrine if he does not believe the doctrine? Immediately we enter John's gospel, we are carried back before the beginning of everything which did begin. He had no beginning. He stands distinct from all creation, superior to it all. In the beginning was the Word, his eternal existence. The Word was with God, his personal distinction. The [00:05:01] Word was God, his deity. The same was in the beginning with God. He was eternally distinct in his person. He has greater glory than all creation in virtue of the fact that he created everything. All things were made by him. As the Word, he is not only the revealer, but he is what is revealed. When he was asked, who art thou? He replied, altogether that which I also say to

you.

John 8 25, new translation, his Word presented himself. In connection with this wonderful revelation, as to distinction of persons in the Godhead, there is also the manifestation of [00:06:04] personal relationships. If these relationships are personal, then they are eternal, for the persons are eternal. Hence we learn, that the Word became. He was not made, he became flesh, and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth. John 1 14, John reflecting in the power of the Holy Spirit, upon the wonder of the incarnation, said, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. He was, indeed he ever is, the unique Son. Five times in the writings of John, he is called the only begotten. This is the glory of his relationship. Verse 14, [00:07:02] in John 1, then in verse 18, the sweet intimacy of the Father's bosom belongs to this unique relationship. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only one of his kind, unique in relationship, and in the sweetness of the affections proper to that relationship. This is the thought conveyed in the name, only begotten Son. There is no thought of birth or generation. The Word is descriptive of unique relationship and love. We might say also, that five times in the New Testament, he is called firstborn. Here again, it is not the thought of order of birth, but of rank. In Psalm 89 verse 27, God speaking of his anointed King said, and asked of me, I will make him firstborn, [00:08:10] highest of the kings of the earth. Evidently, firstborn is a title signifying distinction of rank, not of historic birth. In Romans 8 29, he is to be the firstborn among many brethren.

Colossians 1 15, he is firstborn of all creation. Having created all, coming by incarnation into his creation, he takes precedence over all. In verse 18 of the same chapter, he is firstborn from among the dead. In Hebrews 1, when he was brought as firstborn into the habitable world, [00:09:03] the hosts of angels are commanded to worship him. Again in Revelation 1 verse 5, he is firstborn from the dead, prince of the kings of the earth. So whether it be creation, resurrection, his brethren, the angelic hosts, or the kings of the earth, he takes the first place. In all things, he might have the preeminence. Thus, as the firstborn, he is the chief, first in rank. As the only begotten, he is the unique son of the father's love. He became flesh, but he never became son. As we ponder the glory and grace of his incarnation, let the word of truth in the power [00:10:03] of the spirit of truth convince us that we are not beholding sonship by incarnation, but we are beholding the incarnation of the son. Thus, as the word, and he is the eternal word, he is the revelation of God. As the only begotten son, he is the declarer, manifester of the father. He has brought to light the relationships in the Godhead with the affections proper to them. Three things at least command our attention in the gospel. One, the glory of his person. Two, the glory of his power. Three, the glory of his love. The miracles recorded in this gospel have [00:11:02] the character of signs. Whatever dispensational features come before us in them, and they are rich in such instruction, let us ever remember that their prime intent is to engage us with, as manifesting it to us, the glory of our Lord. These are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life through his name. John 20 verse 31. As we think of his glory, let us remind ourselves that it comes before us in personal, moral, and official features. When we speak of personal glory, we think of who he is. When we speak of moral glory, we think of his character, his conduct, his ways. When we speak [00:12:07] of official glory, we think of the positions he fills. He is presented to us in the course of the gospel as the shepherd of the sheep. And by the way, this approximates to the truth of his headship in the writings of the Apostle Paul. There shall be one flock, one shepherd. John 10 verse 16. He was amongst his own as the comforter, the one who fully undertook for them. For he spoke of the coming spirit as another comforter. He is the bread of life. He is the door. He is the true vine. He is the son of David. He is the son of man. He is the son of God. He is the baptizer [00:13:04] with the Holy Ghost. He is the resurrection. He is the life. He is the light of the world. He is the light of life. He is the last Adam. He

breathed on them. John 20 verse 22, and said unto them, Receive ye Holy Ghost. He is the feet washer. He is the coming one. He is the administrator of all things. For the Father so loves him that he has given all things into his competent hands. And he is also the appointed judge. The Father has committed all judgment to him for two reasons. First, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father which hath sent him. Secondly, [00:14:02] because he is the Son of Man. See John 5 verses 23 and 27. He is the opener of the eyes of the blind. He is the conqueror over death and the grave. He is the resource of his own in barren desert or on raging storm. He is the ascended man. In these varied lights the gospel presents him. Wherever we view him, morally or officially, we are constantly reminded that these things are predicated of him who said, Before Abraham was, I am. He is God in the glory of his person. However lowly he has stooped in the charm of his grace. Oh, how else could we understand the words, No man hath ascended [00:15:05] up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. John 3 verse 13. He speaks here of himself under an official title attaching to him on the side of his humanity, yet predicates of himself that which attaches to him on the side of his Godhead. Hence the danger of attempting to separate Godhead and manhood in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Let us distinguish without ever dividing, ever confessing that one person subsists in both natures. He is God. He is man. He is both God and man. This blessed conclusion is impressed upon us [00:16:09] as we meditate upon him as presented by the Spirit throughout the gospel of John. And as we draw a meditation to a close, we are reminded of three wonderful scenes at the close of the gospel. One, Thomas, convinced before him, anticipates the nation in his individual confession, My Lord and my God. John 20 verse 8. See also Isaiah 25 verse 9. Two, the disciple whom Jesus loved, love is of quick discernment, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. John 21 verse 7. A fitting epitome indeed [00:17:04] for this gospel, which the Spirit inspired him to pen. Three, Peter, in the moment of his thorough humbling, the Lord dealing with him for his full recovery amongst his brethren, said, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. John 21 verse 17. Do we join him, dear brethren, before a glorious Lord, of whom we read, having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them to the end? John 13 verse 1. And do we say in sincere confession to him, Lord Jesus, thou art omniscient. And although it takes omniscience to discern it, because of its comparative smallness, [00:18:04] we tell out our love to thee, we dearly love thee. His glory increases before us, but instead of affrighting, it attracts us, because it is the glory of him who loves us with an eternal love. And we love him, because he has first loved us. Amen. Fragmentary remarks on John chapter 19 verse 38 to chapter 20 verse 23. Joseph and Nicodemus begged the body of Jesus. Both were thus brought [00:19:01] into the light of day as identified with him. The cross had drawn a dividing line between them and the world, religious, political, and social. Mary Magdalene, subject of the love and delivering power of the Son of God, cannot rest where he is not. He graciously manifests himself to her. He would lead his own, step by step, from the cross to the tomb, to learn its emptiness, for he is risen. Whom seekest thou? In Psalm 56 verse 8 we read, Thou tellest my wonderings. Put thou my tears in thy bottle. The Lord, in his questioning, interprets the sorrow occasioned by his absence, [00:20:05] and meets the heart in its extremity. He binds up the brokenhearted. Revealing himself, he indicates that the old order is ended. Touch me not. Yet indicates the possibility of association with him in a new position. I am not yet ascended to my Father. And now the new relationship, my God and your God, my Father and your Father. God is for us as he was for the Son of God. He is Father to us as he is to him. We are Christ's brethren. The life of the new relationship is received in the power of the Spirit. The last Adam breathes on them. Receive ye Holy Spirit. Whilst we are given [00:21:10] his place before God the Father, we are equally given his place before the world. Not just as sharers of his rejection, true as that is, but as his sent ones, to be for him where he once had been for the Father. As he speaks peace to them, that unruffled calm, to set them at rest, that peace secured by his dying, he showed unto them his hands on his side. He constituted and commissioned them as carriers of the glad evangel of forgiveness and the

administration of it in the testimony. Blessed words. Amen. Here are ten pictures found in these verses and I would entitle them with [00:22:11] Christ in death and resurrection. One, Joseph Nicodemus identified with him in his death. Two, Mary of Magdala Amona here. Three, with him in resurrection. Four, links with the old altar broken. Five, new links with the ascended one. Six, new relationship in the knowledge of his God and Father as ours. Seven, the assembly rallied round Christ at the centre. Eight, he gives us his place before the world. Nine, he gives them the life of the new place. Ten, the marks of their [00:23:06] mission, grace and holiness.