

“Who Is This Man?” (#1 of 10) Scripture Reading: John 1:1-9

Preached on Feb 19, 2017, by R. Lankheet, at New Horizon URC, Toronto

Before reading: We begin a sermon series on the first four chapters of the book of John.

The apostle Paul writes in Phil 3: “I consider everything (everything!) a loss compared to the surpassing

greatness of **knowing Christ Jesus** my Lord.” Compared to knowing Jesus, everything else in life is a loss. A big minus, a negative. // If Paul, the great preacher (讲道者) and missionary (宣教士) said that he needed to know Jesus Christ more, **then, surely, we must also.**

[Read 1:1-9.

Introduction: Many books are written today to answer certain questions. To answer ordinary human questions. Now, some books have the added goal, of actually changing our minds. Changing our lives. The answers provided in the book are so profound, so important, that our lives are actually changed by it./

-That’s particularly true of John’s book, a short book of just 21 chapters. Listen to what John himself says near the end of his book: [quote] “These [things, these words] are written

so that you **may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,**
and that by believing **you may have life in his name.”**

WHY was John writing? So that we will believe that Jesus is God. Believing in Jesus means more than an intellectual belief that Jesus lived, died, and rose again.

True belief means having a trust, a confidence, in Jesus. And John says as we trust (信靠) in Jesus,

we then will have life. John makes it clear, later, that this life is a full life, a meaningful life.

-So, who, really, is this Jesus? Who is this man?

1. [Read 1:1-2. To answer the question: who is this man, John says, first of all He is **“THE WORD.”** The Word. Maybe you already know that the underlying Greek here is **“LOGOS.”** (道) Trans. as “the Word.”

“Logos” must be understood here especially in the context (背景) of the Old Testament. Remember, John, first of all, was a Jew. He was raised with the OT Scriptures.

And those Scriptures testify about Jesus. So, for example, Psalm 33:6.

Says: “By the **Word of the LORD** [Yahweh] were the heavens made.” [Repeat.

The Word of the LORD. In Greek translation that is Logos, the Logos of Yahweh.

Like Psalm 33, John connects this description of Jesus as the Word, to the act of creation.

Forming the original creation. Look at 1:3: “Through him (Jesus/Logos) all things were made.” So John brings us back to the very beginning. As described in Genesis

chapter 1.

-Look again at the first words written by John, in verse 1: “In the beginning.”

So we are brought back to the creation. And even before creation.

Those three words are the same three words, which begin the Bible.

Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning...God created the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 1 continues: “And God said: let there be light. And there was light.”

Who is Jesus? From John’s perspective (视角), rooted in the OT?

Jesus is first of all the **LOGOS-the Word**. And secondly, we will see, Jesus is **LIFE**.

And thirdly, Jesus is **LIGHT**. So: **LOGOS—LIFE—LIGHT**.

Do you see how those three descriptions of Jesus are interconnected?

Jesus as the Logos- Word, in the beginning. From the Logos-Word, Jesus, comes Life.
And from the Logos-Word, Jesus, comes Light. Logos-Life-Light.

The same words are interconnected in Genesis chapter 1, the creation:

God spoke the word, there was light, and there was life.

-So, vs. 1 of John 1, John says the Logos was “with God” and that Logos “was God.”
Being “with God in the beginning.”

The first thing John wants us to know is: That this man, Jesus, is fully and truly God. And not merely to know in our brains, but to trust from our hearts, is that Jesus is fully and truly God. Jesus was not merely *with* God, oh, that too.....but He actually **IS GOD**.
Jump ahead to [verse 14a.. Read. That Word, Logos, became flesh. Jesus took on a human

Body of flesh. But before J. took on a human body, He was God. In the very beginning. /

Now, did God have His start, at the time of creation? When he created the heavens and the

earth? No. God always existed. So, Jesus, with God, has always existed. Oh, he was not then named “Jesus.” “Jesus” was the name that Joseph and Mary gave to their baby. But before he became a baby, and grew up to be a man, He was the eternal Logos-Word. From all eternity (永恒) ./

Now, this conviction (认信), ultimately, is a matter of faith (信心). It cannot be proved by the scientific method. But let’s be honest: many things cannot be “proven” in that sense---by the scientific method. Prove to me, scientifically, that you are real.

That you are really, truly, sitting here this morning. Prove that this is not all a dream.

So, at some point, the best scientists will say, we accept certain assumptions (假设) about ourselves, and about reality which cannot be proven scientifically. So we assume not only that God exists, but that Jesus is God, from eternity. It’s one of those “givens.”

Now, there are helpful indicators, throughout the Bible, to help show us that Jesus is fully God.

So this is not just a “blind leap” of faith.

For example, only God can forgive sins. Jesus says he, Jesus, forgives peoples’ sins.

That’s an indicator that Jesus is indeed God. /

-Now this belief, Jesus fully as God, puts us in complete disagreement with various groups, for

example, the Mormons (摩门教), and the Jehovah’s Witnesses (耶和华见证人). They claim that Jesus is less than God. Not fully God. Godly, godlike, but not equal to Father-God or Jehovah God.

John, one of those who knew Jesus best, clearly rejects that idea.

Instead, John clearly affirms that Jesus is really, truly, God. **JESUS IS THE LOGOS.**

2. “Who is Jesus, this man?” John tells us something more... Jesus is **THE LIFE**. [Read vs. 3-4.

So, in Genesis chapter 1. We read that God created the light. Then God caused the

separation of waters above from waters below. The dry ground was created, with seas around the dry ground. Then, on day three, God created the plants, seed-bearing plants, fruit-bearing trees, and so on. And later, God created the fish, the birds, the land animals, and finally, the first human being.

God created life. And theologians (神学家) will say that the source of all life, is in God. God is Life.

Think of it: the source, the basis, the foundation of all living is in Jesus.

John finds that very significant, as he explains about Jesus. That as God, Jesus also is Life.

That all living things, ultimately, are rooted and grounded in Jesus. [1:4.

-The apostle (使徒) Paul says something similar in Acts 17. That “in God we live and move and have our being.” In God, in Jesus, we can say, all of us live and we move, and we have our being.

Now, we have to be careful to distinguish (分辨) created life from divine life, God’s life.

Else we become “pan-theists.” (泛神论者) You perhaps know that pantheism (泛神论), a philosophy (哲学思想), even a type of religion says even the trees, animals, have a little bit of God in them.

Some of the Walt Disney movies pretend that God is a kind of magical, mystical life force, in which every rock and tree and river, participates. To that we say no.

God is life and the source of life. But God also stands apart from and above His creation.

God is distinct (区别于, 不同于) from his creation. God is of a different order, the highest order.

Appl: Think of it: in some real sense, the life pulse of all things is rooted in Jesus.

As God, with the Father and the Spirit, Jesus is the source, the foundation, of all our living. All our existence. So, Jesus is not merely an “add on” to our lives—a sort of “religious dimension” added to the other dimensions of our experience. No. Jesus is the very foundation of who we are. Who we as humans are meant to be.

Nothing, then, can be more important than knowing Jesus. Nothing.

Appl: So, I would ask: do you know Jesus? The Jesus of the Bible? Do you know J to be the

very foundation of your life, your experience? Our Catechism (教理问答) comes very close to this same emphasis when it begins by asking: “What is your only comfort, your only strength, in your living and your dying? What is your foundation, in life and in death?”

The answer, as you know it, is this: “That I belong to Jesus. I do not, ultimately, belong to myself, rooted and grounded in my self-preoccupation (自我沉迷), my self-interests. But I am rooted, grounded, in Jesus.” With John the apostle we must say: Jesus is our **LOGOS**, our Creator-Word; He is also our **LIFE** Foundation.

3. This is made more clear in third description that John gives about Jesus.

JESUS IS THE LIGHT. [Read vs. 4-5, 9.

Life and light are closely interconnected. Life and light are inter-related.

Again, consider ordinary creation. Genesis chapter 1. Light is the first thing which God created. Day one. God said, “let there be light.” Light was. Day 2—waters

separated, dry ground appears. Then, day 3, plant life is created. But to sustain plant life, you need light. Biological science helps us here.

To sustain the birds and fish, they need plant life. To sustain plant life, they need light. So, life requires light, in order to continue. Light preserves life. So, biblically speaking, Jesus is the Logos, creating all things. But, to sustain life, and increase life, Jesus is also the Light.

John brings out **two things** about light, **3.A.** Light shines in contrast to darkness.

3.B. Secondly, the light of Jesus shines universally.

3.A. Light stands in contrast to darkness. Very interesting to study what darkness is.

Ask a scientist, a physicist (物理学家). Essentially darkness is a negative. Not a positive. Darkness is defined as an absence of light. Darkness is a negative. An absence, a void. /So, what is John saying about the world into which Jesus came? Well, that world essentially was a world of darkness. A void (空虚), an emptiness.

[Read vs. 5. So the light must shine in the world of darkness.

Illus: I recall driving north of Toronto, out in the countryside. Long before GPS was common.

Very dark. No streetlights. Very confusing. Totally lost. I didn't even know which direction I was going.

The world of darkness, people of darkness, without any light in them, do not see Jesus.

That means they have no real direction in life. They are lost. Truly lost. [Read vs. 5b. In John chapter 3, Jesus says this about Himself: "Light has come into the world, **BUT** men

[people] loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

Ah, that goes to the heart of it. We as human beings, by nature, do what is evil. No, not every moment of every day. We can do some outwardly moral good things.

But, in our hearts, ultimately, there is deep spiritual darkness, that is, an absence of light. An absence of God, of Jesus. And so, we have this inner sense of dread (恐惧), of fear of God. Because He will expose us, for who we are, deep inside.

Yet, by nature, we prefer to remain in darkness. Jesus says people even **love** the darkness. They would rather remain where they are, without Jesus, rather than come into His light. Because Jesus light tells us things we would rather not hear about ourselves.

Even as Christians....we would prefer to keep things covered up.

But with new life in Jesus, Jesus the life-giving Word...then, we start to see and to understand.

Not only about Jesus....but also about ourselves. That we truly have been living in the darkness all this time. That there is darkness in our hearts, our souls, our minds.

-And, remember, Jesus doesn't merely show us the sin darkness in us, but He then **enables**

us to trust in Him. To have confidence that our sin-darkness has been taken from us.

That God's judgment now does not fall upon us. Because that judgment fell on Jesus.

So we don't have to be afraid of God. We don't have to be afraid of Jesus as our Judge. Why not? Bec. He has taken our sin from us. And in his light, we then

experience His forgiveness and love. The Psalmist says: The Lord is my Light and

my Salvation, whom then shall I fear? Of whom then shall I be afraid? / Do not be afraid....look to J, his light!

We're skipping the next few verses, about John the Baptist (施洗约翰) —we'll look at them next time.

Let's end with what we find in vs. 9. [Read vs. 9. One more thing about J as the Light.

3.B. Where does He shine? He "gives light to every man [every person]."

Not that Jesus saves everyone. Not that everyone will come to trust him as Saviour.

But to some degree, outwardly, Jesus as the light, shines upon all people. Even upon those who end up being unbelievers.

Hebrews 6 talks about those who have "**been enlightened**" by God. They have [quote]

"tasted the heavenly gift" and they have "shared in the Holy Spirit." Yet they are unbelievers, says the writer to the Hebrews (希伯来书) ...in the end, they are not saved. Heb 6 says that to some degree they were "enlightened." (被光照)

Enlightened by Jesus. Jesus the Light shines upon unbelievers in some sense.

Appl: Among other things, that gives us a "point of contact" with unbelievers.

Think of it, today, in the GTA...many people today, still have a general knowledge of God. And many people know something about Jesus. Or, if they don't, most people are "religious." And many people will at least consider the fact that Jesus might be a good teacher, a prophet (先知) from God. It's a starting point in our witness (见证)

.... We must be patient.... Start to read the Bible, together...The Book of John would be a good place to start...

Concl: Who is this Jesus, this man, crucified on that cross 2000 years ago?

The man raised from the dead on the third day?

John knew Jesus, on this earth, while he was living here.

And John tells us clearly, that Jesus was and is God, from the beginning. Came to earth.

May each of us know this Jesus and trust in him...as our **LOGOS, our LIFE, our LIGHT.** //

Let us pray....