

The Life of Jesus – Week 3

Light, Power and the Supernatural Gospel

Ice-breaker

What, if any, supernatural event(s) have you experienced?

This week will be catch up on where we left John 1 two weeks ago before we go on to Luke where Marc left off last week.

John 1:1:1-5

The pre-existence of The Word

The possible meanings of The Word, the Light, the Darkness (and other terms used in John's gospel)

The relationship between God and The Word

1:6

John is introduced – very, very sparse information.

- Why did the writer barely mention “the man who appeared” (John)?

[Maybe because he knew Luke's gospel, and thought there was no further elaboration needed?]

1:9

Two possible readings:

1. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ("Jesus" is the subject of "coming")
2. He was the true light that enlightens everyone coming into the world. ("everyone" is the subject "coming")

Both are equally valid translations.

- What do you make of these two different readings?

1:10

... “The world did not know him, his own people did not accept him”

- What might this suggest about when this gospel was written?

1:12

“[The true Light] gave [those who received him] POWER to become children of God.”

What is meant by POWER?

Two Greek words for “power” δύναμις and ἐξουσία

John uses this word 5 times, always in the context of Authority

Mark uses ἐξουσία and also δύναμις (from which we get “dynamite”) 9:1; 13:26; 14:62

Meanings of ἐξουσία:

power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases - leave or permission

physical and mental power - the ability or strength with which one is endowed, which he either possesses or exercises

the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege)

the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed)

Which of these two did John use?

He (Jesus) gives choice, ability, strength, the right to “those who believe in his name” (ἐξουσία)

1:13

- What does it mean to be born of/from God?

1:14

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth”

We discussed *the Word became Flesh* two weeks ago, so we needn't go over that again now.

But what about the “we have seen his glory” bit?

- There is no doubt that many people in the Palestine of Jesus' day did experience that. Since we in C21 have not experienced the actual reality of Jesus's earthly ministry are we at a disadvantage? Why/why not? Does it matter?

1:18

“No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.”

What’s meant by “the Father’s heart”? and “made him known”? = set forth in great detail

With that we’ll leave John for a couple of weeks and switch over to Luke 1 and a bit of 2

There’s much talk of the “Markan sandwich” – they way in which Mark starts a story, then moves on to another one then switches back to the first.

Here in Luke 1 we have a multi-decker sandwich:

- 1-5 Prologue
- 5-7 History (two main player introduced)
- 8-10 Zechariah and the angel
- 21-25 History (update on Zechariah and Elizabeth)
- 26-38 Mary and Gabriel
- 39-45 History (Mary goes to visit Elizabeth)
- 46-56 Mary’s song of praise
- 57-66 History (birth of John)
- 67-79 Zechariah’s prophecy

Zechariah and History – who was Zechariah? The parallel between John and Jesus genealogies.

Zechariah was a Levitical Aaronite Priest

Jesus is a Judahite Davidic King

Supernatural events... (Artwork – see powerpoint)

- 8-10 Zechariah and the angel
- 26-38 Mary and Gabriel
- 67-79 Zechariah’s prophecy

- How do you think Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary reacted to these events?
- How would you have reacted if you’d been Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary?
- How do you think the people at the time reacted?
- How do you think the earliest readers of Luke’s gospel reacted?
- How do you react to these events now?
- How can talk we meaningfully to non-Christians about such events today?

Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. He has sent us a mighty Saviour from the royal line of his servant David, just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago.

Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. He has been merciful to our ancestors

by remembering his sacred covenant—the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness

for as long as we live. And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins.

Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”