

Synopsis 014c Description of the Messiah part 3

[John 1:18-24; mark it] Sometimes there seems to be a conflict between verse 18 and other passages of Scripture. It says, “No man has seen God at any time”. We read where Isaiah says, “Woe is me, for I have seen the Lord.” Every manifestation of the God-head in the OT was the second person of the Trinity. The Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who came to reveal the Father. Here, where it says, “No man has seen God at any time”, it is talking about the complete God-head, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in all His glory.

Moses had a desire to see the glory of the Lord, he desired to see the face of the Lord, but that was not granted to him. The only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him. Some translators try to take the verb “declared” and make a noun out of it and they say, “He is the declaration or exposition of the Father”. But, he reveals him; he shows him forth.

But, if you think to John 14, Jesus says to Philip, “He who hath seen me hath seen the father”. There’s continuity and an order to the revelation. The Lord came to reveal the Father; he never drew attention to himself. The Holy Spirit was sent to reveal the Son. He never drew attention to himself. It was to make the other known.

Now, when Jehovah appeared in the garden seeking Adam and Eve, that was the second person of the God-head. The appearing in the burning bush; that was the second person. The one Joshua saw (the captain of the Lord’s host) was Jehovah; the second person. The one who appeared to Menoah; the one appearing to Isaiah. The glory of the Lord is so bright that man cannot look upon that glory in his natural condition and survive.

We read in John 1:14 here, that the Word became flesh. The glory of the Lord enclosed in a body of flesh, and we beheld the glory of the only begotten of the father. That reminds us of Hebrews 1:1-2, which speaks of “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (Now) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son”. The revelation of God to man is as the Son. If you want to know God the father, study the son.

That was the message that John had when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him, “Who art thou?” So many people came out to John that it attracted the attention of the rulers. Herod himself had an interview with John the Baptizer. So, the leaders sent an envoy out to John to ask him who he was.

John’s answer brings out three things that are admirable traits in anyone, but particularly in servants of the Lord. First of all, he was sincere. That’s something that’s missing in so much of the ministry today. So many people treat it as if it’s a play or just a show. Sometimes, a simple statement can color one’s entire life and entire thought, but in connection with the sincerity of John, and the play-like attitude of others and the words of

Paul to the church at Corinth: “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” The foolishness of preaching.

The gospel is to be preached and not to be played at. Back in the Middle Ages, they had their religious plays and religious dramas. Dr. James M. Gray, a former president of MBI, in connection with this thought, said that a Christian has no business on either side of the spotlight. I’m not sure that I agree with that statement 100%, but how many of those in the spotlight are sincere? You don’t play at preaching the gospel. Be sincere.

It has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, not the preaching of foolishness, but, the foolishness of preaching... To think that a God-called man standing in the pulpit with a Bible can declare God’s word, and people can be saved: That’s foolish! But, it has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save those who are believing.

You may say, “But hundreds of thousands of people are saved because they watched this movie or that movie, or this televangelist or that televangelist”. That may be. God honors his word, but do such really honor him? Some do, some don’t.

But, John was sincere. He wasn’t playing. “Who are thou?” He came out first thing, and said, “I’m not the Christ!” In this, the second thing we see about John is that he was humble. “I am not the Christ.”

The third thing about him is that he honored the Lord when he preached.

[John 1:20-21a; Elijah] “You must be some big shot to have these hundreds and thousands of people flocking to you to hear your message.” “Are you Elijah?”

[Malachi 4:5-6] There’s a prophecy and a promise of God that he’s going to send Elijah.

[Revelation 11:3-6a] “And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses [these are the witness that will appear in the Tribulation], and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days [42 months; 3 ½ years], clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy...” It’s not going to rain for 3 ½ years. What prophet was it that shut the heavens that it didn’t rain for 3 ½ years? Elijah. [Revelation 11:6b] Who had that power? Moses.

I believe that this calls to our attention that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah. Malachi says that Elijah is coming back before that day and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest God smite the earth with a curse.

Let’s finish reading about these two witnesses. [Revelation 11:7-9] With TV satellites, the internet, and other forms of communications we have, that could happen very easily.

[John 1] This group of priests and Levites that came out asked him, “Are you Elijah?”

When the Lord came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, the Lord said that if Israel as a nation would accept him as their savior and turn to him, then the prophecy in Malachi would be fulfilled in John the Baptist. But, did they accept Jesus? No. So, we look for Elijah.

When the Lord was at Caesarea Philippi, he asked the disciples a question. This was a great summer resort built by Phillip when he was Caesar. It was a spa situated 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee and at the base of Mt. Hermon. Caesarea Philippi is the location of one of the largest springs feeding the Jordan River.

But, they were there, and he asked the disciples a question: “Whom do men say that I, the son of man am?”

“Some say that thou art John the Baptist.” Herod thought he was John the Baptist. Herod had John beheaded, and John haunted him so to speak, and he thought that Jesus was John come back to life.

“Some say that you’re Elijah.” Again, the prophecy of Malachi. Some thought he was Elijah.

“Some think you are Jeremiah.” One of the books of the Maccabees says that Jeremiah will come before that great and dreadful day.

“Some think you are some prophet.”

When the Levites asked, “Are you Elijah?” what’s the answer? “No, I’m not.”

Isn’t this interesting in light of the way that so many people are running around the world today claiming to be Christ? According to many in the world, we’re wasting our time looking for the Lord, because he’s already come and he’s x years old and his name is (fill in the blank). That’s how far behind the times we are, I guess.

There are people all over the place claiming to be Christ, and there are many others who claim to represent Christ. Want to know or communicate with Christ? Then you have to go through me.

But, John had no problem saying, “No, I am not the Christ”. “Are you Elijah?” “No.” “Are you that prophet?” “No!”

What prophet? [Deuteronomy 18:15] God is going to raise up a prophet like unto Moses. The children of Israel kept looking for a prophet like unto Moses. That prophet was the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, here in John 1:21, “Are you that prophet like unto Moses?” “Who knows?” He could have said that, but he was honest, and sincere, and what did he say? He said, “No”.

So, they quit guessing, and they asked him, “Who art thou?”

Notice, in this passage, he didn’t tell them what a wicked man he was. He had been filled with the Spirit from his mother’s womb. He was a good man.

If you ask someone today, “Who are you?” the answer may be, “Well, I was a druggie” (murderer, in prison, or something else).

[John 1:22-23] [Isaiah 40] When they asked John who he was, he simply quoted a verse from Isaiah. [Isaiah 40:3-5]

There was a time, that if a person of prestige were to make a journey, he would send out workmen and supplies to prepare the road. They would fill in the potholes, cut down the bumps, and make the road smooth. Here is the announcement of the one who comes as the forerunner of the Lord. [Isaiah 40:3-5]

[John 1] So, John said in verse 23, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” How often do we forget that we are simply vessels? Why is it so difficult to remember that it’s the message that’s important and not the messenger?

If a Western Union messenger showed up, would it matter to you what kind of vehicle he is driving? Would it matter what he’s wearing? What’s important? It’s the message that’s important.

When the newspaper hits your front porch, do you jump up and see what kind of car the delivery person is driving? How about what they’re wearing? Is it a man, woman, boy, or girl? It’s the message that’s important.

“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” “Listen to what I have to say!”

When someone becomes more interested in how he says something than in what he’s saying, he’s finished. If you’re more interested in your appearance; when you’re more interested in the messenger than the message; you’re done.

If someone were to come in right now and yell, “Fire!” would you care what gesture he uses or what words he uses?

Well, John simply says, “I’m just a voice”.

[John 1:23-24] There were several great religious groups in that day, but the two largest and most powerful were the Sadducees and Pharisees. The Sadducees were the affluent and politically powerful and they believed in themselves more than they did in God. They didn’t believe in the supernatural, or the resurrection of the dead, the ministry of

angels, and they were more interested in what they had than in the God they professed to believe in. (Isn't that the way it is today?)

The Pharisees were at the other extreme, and they were very ritualistic, and they enacted rule after rule, putting their laws on the same level as God's laws. They started out with good intents, but as with so many things that man starts with good intents, they had really made a mess of things. "You can't do this" and "you must do that" was the order of the day. The Pharisees were the ones who began all the ritualistic washing of the hands and all those things. But, they did believe in the resurrection, and the ministry of angels, and the Holy Spirit. This was a bunch of Pharisees that had gone out and they were going to see who this guy was and see if he was orthodox and see if they approved of him.

So, they went out to see him, and here in verse 25, they ask him, "Then why are you baptizing?" "If you're not the Christ, and you're not Elijah, and you're not that prophet like unto Moses, then why are you baptizing all these people? Only we have the right to baptize." You will run into that today. People teach that unless you are baptized by a person who was baptized by a person who was baptized by John, then you have no authority to baptize. It's a little ecclesiastical trick that men worked up to try to get things under their dominion and out of the hands of the Lord.

"Why are you baptizing?" John has already shown his sincerity, and he's already shown his humility, and he shows a third characteristic here when he answered [John 1:26; with water – in water]. Now, if you remember back in Matthew 3:11, John says, "I indeed baptize you ~~with~~ in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you ~~with~~ in the Holy Ghost Spirit, and ~~with~~ in fire."

John tells them, you're all worked up about me baptizing people with water, when there's standing in your midst, the Messiah; Jehovah; the Christ; Jesus! [John 1:26b] They were so wrapped up in their rituals and schemes that they didn't know and didn't see the Lord.

[John 1:27] Here, John the Baptizer is honoring and glorifying the Lord.

"Who are you?" "What difference does it make? If my message is from God, hear it, and if it's not, ignore it."

[John 1:28-29] The definite article "the" is used with the word "Lamb" here to emphasize to them that this is the lamb for which they had had been looking. ***The*** lamb. The only one. Now, behold him. The emphasis is on "the".

"The lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." What a wonderful passage of Scripture! "The lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

[Genesis 4] The first offering of the lamb of God was to be found in the Garden when God slew some animals and made coats of skin for Adam and Eve. Then, a little while

after that, we find that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice, and what was it? It was the firstlings of the flock. [Genesis 4:4-5]

In Hebrews 11:4, we are told that it was by faith that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice. We're told in Romans 10:17, "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." So, the sacrifice that Abel offered was according to the Word of God. God told Cain and Abel what to do. Abel did what God told him to do, and Cain thought he could do better. Maybe Cain was a little squeamish at the thought of killing a little lamb, but later, we know that he slays his own brother. Cain fixed up something that is aesthetically pleasing in the eyes of man, but God requires blood. (How about today?)

[Hebrews 9] We have three statements that you must master that relate to this. [Hebrews 9:7; ***not without blood.***] [Hebrews 9:18; 22] That's the fundamental truth to get in mind concerning sacrifice and concerning the Lamb of God. "Without the shedding of blood"; "Not without blood".

Now, after Abel's offering of the firstling of the flock, we have Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah. And just as Abraham was prepared to slay his son, his hand is stayed and his eye is attracted to a ram caught in a thicket by the horns and he was told not to slay his son and offer the ram, and there an innocent ram shed his blood for guilty Isaac.

As you go on through the Bible, you learn the progression and implication of the blood. On Mt. Moriah, blood was shed. In Egypt, the blood was sprinkled on the doorpost and lintel. At Sinai, it was sprinkled on the people. This is progression in the application of the blood. Number one; it was shed. Number two; it was sprinkled on the doorpost. Number three; it was sprinkled on the people themselves.

With the erection of the Tabernacle and the Holy of Holies, elaborate provision was made for the offering of the sacrifices and for the shedding of the blood. Under the altar, there was a large basin made for catching the blood of the animals.

[Revelation 6] We have reference made to this picture in connection to the shedding of the blood of the martyrs. [Revelation 6:9] He saw their souls. In Leviticus 17:11, we're told that the soul or the life is in the blood. When a martyr's life is taken, figuratively speaking I think, their blood is caught in the basin under the altar in heaven, and John saw the souls of them there. That's the picture that we have in the altar in the Tabernacle, and then in the temple, and the provision in the minute details of the offering.

"Behold ***the*** Lamb of God which taketh away ***the*** sin of the world." There's the definite article with "Lamb", and there's also the definite article with "sin". "***The*** sin."

[Romans 6] I want to leave you with one more thing this morning that we're going to pick up with next week. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. [Romans 6:23a; For the wages of ***the*** sin is death.] Thanatos. [But the gift of God is life.] This is specific life: eternal life; aionian life. This is where we're going to pick up next week, Lord willing, and look at the meaning of "***the*** life". [Romans 6:23]