

The Gospel of John ~ May 11, 2008

John 20:30-31

Introduction:

1. Misquoting Truth quoting Misquoting Jesus – “Sometimes Christian apologists say there are only three options to who Jesus was: a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. But there could be a fourth option—*legend*.” ~ Bart Ehrman

2. C. S. Lewis – “What are we to make of Jesus Christ?” ~ God in the Dock

a) The Problem

- (1) Sane, Unquestionable Moral Teaching
- (2) Massive Theological Claims

b) Effects

- (1) Hatred
- (2) Terror
- (3) Adoration – “no mild approval.”

c) Legend?

(1) For Lewis, the Gospels are too deliberate and precise not to be true accounts. He remarks that not up until the early modern period, the art of inventing stories with such realism and intricate detail was not seen in literary achievements of the past.

(2) So how do we explain the nature of the Gospels? The author saw what he wrote. They were eyewitness testimony; not legend.

d) The Question Changes

(1) Once one answers the question, “What are we to make of Jesus Christ?” the tables are turned and there is nothing left except for the question “of what he intends to make of us?”

- (2) Read final paragraph?

I. Exegesis of John 20:30-31

A. 20:30

1. Signs

a) What signs?

- (1) The crucifixion, resurrection, and Thomas?
- (2) The book of signs? = Jn 2-12

b) Literary Features of John –

- (1) The Prologue – 1:1-18
- (2) The Book of Signs – 1:19-12:50
- (3) The New Messianic Community – 13-17
- (4) The Passion – 18-19
- (5) The Resurrection – 20
- (6) The Epilogue - 21

2. “Before/in the presence of the disciples”- What’s the purpose of including this statement with respect to the rest of this passage?

a) Eyewitness testimony?

b) To emphasize that the signs were done to encourage belief?

3. “Not written in this book.”

4. Does anyone have an objection to the use of “signs” as the means of leading one to faith in Christ? Does this approach make anyone feel uncomfortable?

a) *Calvin* – “Although, therefore, strictly speaking, faith rests on the word of God, and looks to the word as its only end, still the addition of miracles is not superfluous, provided that they be also viewed as relating to the word, and direct faith towards it.” This is further supported by the insertion of John’s prologue before the “Book of Signs” which shows that Jesus is the Word made flesh. I would like to write some one day on how in John’s Gospel, Jesus is the Word of God that has been sent forth and did not return empty/void (Isa 55:11).

B. 20:31

1. “But These are written” – John has selected this grouping of signs for a particular purpose. Therefore, as we read them and see Jesus perform his miraculous acts, we must filter them through John’s intention for selecting these and not others. They each in their own way have a part to play in presenting Jesus as the object of the following confession of faith.

2. Purpose – John writes his gospel, though not exclusively, with an evangelistic intention. He desires to persuade those who have read his gospel to come to its end and have no problem voicing and affirming the confession of faith. All the many factors contribute to the case being built up that Jesus is the long-expected Messiah. Even events such as washing the disciples’ feet or the Farewell Discourse, work together with all of the other signs to demonstrate that belief in Jesus is not out of place. John’s high-Christology and overt identification of Jesus as both the Messiah and God leaves the reader with a clear choice to make: either yes or no to Jesus as the Son of God, the Savior of all mankind. Most likely John has in mind unbelieving Jews and Gentile proselytes. It seems that his purpose for writing his gospel was to answer the specific theological questions of those who would have been informed enough to ask them; hence, the heavy OT theological landscape of the book. *****See John 12:37 – Signs/Unbelief** – It appears that John’s use of the signs in 2-12 demonstrate who Jesus is, yet at this point, he notes the onlookers’ unbelief. The book of signs goes on hiatus while Jesus prepares his disciples for the cross-event and their new messianic mission until his arrest in Jn 18. From there on we see the unfolding of a new sign which the final sign in 2-12, namely, the raising of Lazarus, so dramatically alluded to, that is, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, once he has suffered, died, resurrected, and appeared to his disciples, John returns to the theme of belief to show that these have been written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, especially after seeing him as the triumphant, resurrected Lord.

3. Confession – Do you readily affirm and confess in full assurance in your hearts and minds that the Christ, the Son of God, is Jesus?

4. Who is the Messiah? Who is the Son of God? A work of Identification: How should we understand John’s purpose clause?

a) Why “identity” and not “kind”?

(1) John seems to show from the very beginning that Jesus is the “sent one” of God who will reveal the Father, and do the work, will, and words of God just as the Messiah was supposed to do. Three times Jesus is said to be the Messiah: 1:41; 4:25-26; and 11:27.

b) Most likely geared towards a Jewish audience with respect to the plethora of OT allusions and quotations.

c) John has a High-Christology which is manifested from the outset.

d) The result of belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God confirms that it is in *his* name in which one will find eternal life and nowhere else. Thus, this supports the purpose of identifying the proper person who will be administering God's salvation.

e) Calvin – “And, indeed, he who, after having received those striking proofs, which are to be found in the Gospel, does not perceive Christ to be God, does not deserve to look even at the sun and the earth, for he is blind amidst the brightness of noonday.”

5. Result – eternal life – In this purpose clause we see all three of the major theological themes of John's gospel in the forefront: Christology, soteriology, and eschatology. ****See 1 John 5:13**

6. In his name?

7. In-textuality - ****Textual relationship to Thomas' confession.**** - How should we view John's purpose statement in light of Thomas' confession?

a) Sign = The Resurrected Lord

b) Before the Disciples = specifically Thomas

c) Thomas Believed

d) Thomas had a particular confession – not blind faith or arbitrary belief. Instead, his belief was rooted in the truth of who Jesus was and what he had done. On in the truth can one find life. Jesus is the only way, truth, and life (14:6).