

Quarter Four: Themes in the Gospel of John

Jill Morikone

Lesson 3—The Backstory: The Prologue

Wednesday: Reappearing Themes—Belief / Unbelief

October 16, 2024

- **Last Week:** “Signs of Divinity”
 - Last 3 signs / miracles that Jesus performed (John 6, 9, 11)
 - Signs that point to Christ’s divinity
 - Feeding of the 5k; man born blind; raising Lazarus from the dead
- **This Week:** “The Backstory: The Prologue”
 - John 1, 3, 9, 17
 - Major themes of the prologue to this gospel
 - Jesus is divine; Jesus is preexistent; Jesus is Creator; Jesus is one with the Father
 - Jesus became flesh to dwell among us
 - The choice exists: to receive or reject Jesus

Memory Text: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** In the Beginning—The Divine Logos (John D)
 - John 1:1 – 5 – Divinity of Christ; Preexistence of Christ; oneness with the Father; Jesus as Creator
- 2. **Monday:** The Word Made Flesh (SQ)
 - John 1:1 – 3; 14 – *logos* is a Person, Jesus, the Son of God; Logos = the Word of God; that God becoming one of us & dwelling with us
- 3. **Tuesday:** Hearing or Not Hearing the Word (James)
 - John 1:9 – 13 – theme of whether people receive or reject Jesus; connection of “believing” on Him for salvation (from prologue & conclusion of gospel)
- 4. **Wednesday:** Reappearing Themes—Belief / Unbelief (Jill)
 - John 3, 9, & 12 – difference between believers & unbelievers – those who accept Jesus & those who reject Him (human story line of John’s gospel – interplay between people & Jesus)
- 5. **Thursday:** Reappearing Themes—Glory (Daniel)
 - John 17 – (divine storyline – concept of glory connected with the cross)

Wednesday: Reappearing Themes—Belief / Unbelief

John 3:16 – 21; John 9:35 – 41; John 12:36 – 46

- 2 groups in John’s Gospel: “Receive & Reject”
 - Those who believe in Jesus & accept Him as Messiah
 - Those who have opportunity to believe, but refuse Him
 - Those who Receive & those who reject
 - Believers vs unbelievers

- Belief in John
 - *Pistis* = noun, “faith / belief” not found in the gospel of John
 - *Pisteuo* = *pist-yoo’-o* - verb “believe” occurs 98 times in John (244 times in all of NT)
 - Verb means “those who are continuing to believe”
 - Indicates constant action over time, not a one-time event
 - John 1:12 – “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who **believe** on His name.”
 - Those who “continue to believe on His name”
 - Constant action over time

- **3 snapshots of belief & unbelief: receive & reject**
 - See who is in each group
 - Why they’re in that group

 - Discover that difference is how we respond to Jesus
 - Believers turn **toward** Jesus, even when He confronts or rebukes them
 - Nicodemus – John 3
 - Disciples
 - Woman at the well – John 4
 - Paralytic at Pool of Bethesda – John 5
 - Woman caught in adultery – John 8
 - Man born blind – John 9
 - Mary / Martha – John 11
 - Unbelievers fight **against** Jesus
 - Pharisees & Scribes
 - People who received the miracle of the feeding of the 5k
 - John 6:66 - 68 – “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. (67) Then Jesus said to the 12, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ (68) But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”
 - Judas

3 Snapshots of belief & unbelief: receive & reject

- **1. Call to faith & salvation:** John 3:16 - 21
 - Every call to faith brings judgment with it: one cannot be casual about the gospel
 - Only 2 camps

 - John 3:16, 17 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world to **condemn** the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”
 - God loves us (not just Jesus, Father Himself loves us)
 - God gave us Jesus (for the purpose of salvation)
 - Eternal life = a gift
 - Believes = *pist-yoo’-o* = “those who are continuing to believe”
 - Indicates constant action over time

- Belief in Jesus & His blood guarantees our salvation
 - Condemn = “judge”
 - **Call to action:** believe & accept this great gift of salvation
 - John 3:18 – 20 – “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”
 - We reject the Light (Jesus) because
 - We’re afraid to show our sin / our true nature
 - We naturally love sin
 - We prefer to hold onto what is known, then allow God to change us
 - Eternal death is the result of our own choice
 - Because men loved darkness rather than light
 - John 3:21 – “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”
 - Following Jesus requires acknowledgement of our sin
 - It involves transparency in our lives
 - **Call to action:** don’t be afraid to bring your junk to the Light (to Jesus)
 - Nicodemus did the right thing
 - He dwelt in spiritual darkness, but he came to Jesus (the Light)
 - He moved from darkness to light
 - By contrast, Judas moved from light to darkness
 - John 13:30 – “Having received the piece of bread, he (Judas) then went out immediately. And it was night.”
- **2. Call to make a decision:** John 9:35 – 41
 - Sight & blindness
 - Man born blind – who sinned, this man or his parents?
 - Jesus: “Neither, that God may be glorified”
 - Jesus mixed his saliva with the clay & anointed the man’s eyes – washed in the pool of Siloam & received his sight
 - Pharisees upset
 - Man received sight & wouldn’t deny Jesus
 - Pharisees spiritual leaders – yet couldn’t see
 - Cast man out of the synagogue
 - John 9:35 – 38 – “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ (36) He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ (37) And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ (38) Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.”
 - Man’s faith – willingness to accept & believe in Jesus

- Only reference in John to someone worshiping Jesus, prior to the crucifixion
- **Call to action:** accept His words at face value; choose to believe
- John 9:39 – 41 – “And Jesus said, ‘For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.’ (40) Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard those words, and said to Him, ‘Are we blind also?’ (41) Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.”
 - In John, whenever Jesus reveals Himself through words or actions, He divides people into believers & unbelievers
 - The blind man = a believer
 - The spiritual leaders = unbelievers
 - **Call to action:** hypocrisy is deadly & unbelief is inexcusable
 - They claimed spiritual light, yet didn’t even see the need for their own conversion
 - They stand in judgment on Him, rather than letting His light measure & judge them
 - Those blinded by sin can be enlightened
 - While those who do not feel the need for light move into deeper darkness
- **3. Call to follow Jesus over men: John 12:35 – 46**
 - Light & darkness
 - John 12:35 - 43 – “Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer the light is with you, Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. (36) While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light’...(42) Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; (43) for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”
 - **Call to action:** choose Jesus for yourself, don’t let the opinions of others hold you back
 - Be wary to prioritize the affirmation of others over the affirmation of God
 - John 12:46 – “I have come as a light into the world that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”
 - **Call to action:** accept Jesus as your Light, so you won’t be left in the darkness of sin forever

3 snapshots of belief & unbelief: receive & reject

- 1. Call to faith & salvation (John 3)
 - Call to action: believe & accept this great gift of salvation
 - Call to action: don’t be afraid to bring your junk to the Light (to Jesus)
- 2. Call to make a decision (John 9)
 - Call to action: accept His words at face value; choose to believe
 - Call to action: hypocrisy is deadly & unbelief is inexcusable

- 3. Call to follow Jesus over men (John 12)
 - Call to action: choose Jesus for yourself, don't let the opinions of others hold you back
 - Call to action: accept Jesus as your Light, so you won't be left in the darkness of sin forever