

November 20, 2016 “That There Might Be No Question” John 1:1-14

This is not meant to be an Advent message. I am not trying to jump the gun and get an early start on Christmas. Five weeks from now it will be Christmas. The malls are all decked out and ready to go. I noted that Santa Clause arrived at the Mall in Belleville, on Saturday morning, and as a result the coffee group of which I am a part met somewhere else...because we knew it was going to be a noisy morning as little children in particular had been invited to have breakfast with Santa. This is specifically a, before-the-Advent-series-begins, message.

The introductory note immediately before the text of the Gospel of John tells us a number of important details about the document. First of all it says, (so this is not just my bias), the author was the disciple of Jesus named John. We need to realize that it is fashionable even in the church, the assembly of believers, to call that kind of detail into question these days. For the balance of 19 centuries it has been accepted that John wrote this Gospel, a number of letters, and the book entitled, “The Revelation to John.” And there is no sound reason to question those facts, except that it is becoming fashionable to question the validity of the Bible as an authority. Clearly I disagree with that idea. John wrote this Gospel account.

Further to that, he was extremely honest as to the reason for his setting pen to paper. In the 20th chapter verse 31, John tells us this concerning the content of his telling of his experience with Jesus: “these are written, (these stories including the miracle stories,) these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.” For the whole of his life John did that in person, that is, he talked to

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people, he taught people about Jesus because he wanted them to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, and that believing they and we should have eternal life.

This document is about Jesus. It is a document that endorses faith in Jesus. It feeds faith in Jesus that it might grow and become the beating heart of the manner in which we live. John was an old man when he wrote these things down. He was probably close to 90 years old. And this document is all about building and buttressing, supporting and feeding faith in Jesus. John said in the document as clearly as anyone can say it...that's why I wrote these things down for current and future generations.

In other words, John is trying to answer some questions before they are asked. To quote a number of the politicians of our age, John wants to make something perfectly clear. "That there might be no question." And it is testimony to the limitations of mankind, and the sinfulness of mankind, that even within the church we have lived to see a time, when these very things are called into question.

John, chapter 1, verses 1-14, is committed to making a singular point. Namely that Jesus is the Christ of Old Testament prophecy. That HE is the one and only Son of God. That HE is divine. To John the disciple, closest human friend that Jesus ever had, this is so basic a point it needs to be spelled out before we are told anything about Jesus life and ministry. And there are a number of things that John tells us at this , beginning of his document to make that point stick with us. Be assured, it is we whom John is concerned about. We are the ones he wants to lead to faith, or whose faith he wants to nurture. We are the ones he wants to lead, as he has

been led, to eternal life.

So John does not begin his Gospel account, the glad tidings, with the Christmas story. In fact he does not include the Christmas story in his account. A lot of people have asked the question how come? Why not? The fact is John, excuse the pun, has more important fish to fry! It is not that he does not know about Jesus birth...he took care of Mary, Jesus mother to the end of her life, in his own home. John probably knew more about what happened at the birth of Jesus than anyone. Than anyone, I say. But what John has grasped is that there is a greater question men and women and young people and children will need to face. And that greater thing, is whether or not Jesus is just a man. John is convinced and was convinced by what he witnessed that Jesus is none other, than the One True God of Israel, come into the world in flesh and blood.

The divinity of Christ! This is not only basic, it is key in importance. And it is why John's account begins with the words "In the beginning." He is mirroring Genesis chapter 1 verse 1 on purpose. He tells us the Word of power existed in the beginning. He says the Word was with God and in fact was God. John is remembering the details of the creation story. That everything that was made was created by God's speaking. By God's Word. And John is saying that word of power by which the universe became, by which the waters were gathered and the land was formed and the creatures including mankind came forth was the result of God saying the word. And John is saying that divine word of power that created...was Jesus. The claim is mind boggling. And yet at that one insight so many pieces fall into place...Jesus own faith. His wisdom. His power to do what we cannot do, or at least what we tend to believe we cannot do. John is saying Jesus is God, and HE was God

in the beginning. At the beginning of time. The power of God's creating. Which is to say when John was 90 years old he proclaimed what we latterly call the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, One God, world without end. And John was smart enough to realize that this one truth is the bedrock on which our faith as disciples of Jesus stands or falls.

Secondly, John in these few facts about creation, is telling us that the One God known to us in the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is eternal in His nature. And you may be tempted to say, because so am I, suddenly you are getting all doctrinal on us, theology, profound and hard to follow. So bear with me as I try again. John is saying back there at the beginning, what science today would call the big bang, God already was. Jesus already was. The Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters. This is the fact, that the question, who created God? Fails to grasp. God is not like you and me. Jesus is not like the flowers in the field, or a mushroom. He was not created as we were created out of nothing. He was before the beginning. He was at the beginning. He has been throughout the logs of time. And he is beyond the ability of time to measure in the future. Jesus is this God come among us.

Not only is there no Christmas story in the Gospel of John, there is no genealogy. Matthew begins his account with the "begats", a family history that ties Jesus humanity to Abraham. Luke gives us a genealogy of Jesus that ties Jesus to Adam the first man. Matthew and Luke have their reasons for doing that. John's first point about Jesus will also be his last point about Jesus. Jesus is the Christ, the son of the Living God. He is divine. And John says "that's my story and I'm sticking to it." He really grasped how hard that would be for us living as we do in troubling and difficult,

materialistic times, where faith is assumed to be a sign of failure to use one's eyes and ears.

I am in my own case, rereading Stroeble's book, *The Case For The Creator*. One of the things I continue to marvel at, is the lack of honesty on the part of scientific writers who know that Darwinian theory does not stand up to the facts of science, but who willfully refuse to say so, lest it be a factor in increasing people's ability to believe in God. Science as a discipline has understood for close to a hundred years that fossils do not explain what Darwinian theory attests. Let me share with you a quotation from physicist Steven Weinberg... "I am all in favour of a dialogue between science and religion, but not a constructive dialogue. One of the great accomplishments of science has been, if not to make it impossible for an intelligent person to be religious, then at least to make it possible for them not to be, religious. We should not retreat from this accomplishment." That is one of the reasons Darwinian theory continues to be published in books purporting to tell the facts, when people in the scientific field know the facts are different.

Back to the Gospel of John. Reread at your leisure this first 14 verses of his account of the ministry of Jesus leading to HIS crucifixion, HIS resurrection, and HIS commissioning of the disciples as evangelists, and leaders of HIS followers. You will find things like these. John does not say Jesus is a god or like God, but that HE is the God of whom the Bible speaks. That all things that were made, were made by HIM. John does not simply attest that Jesus was alive, but that HE is the source of all life. Jesus provides guidance and direction that people need. HE teaches us how to live in this world and HE teaches us the way to heaven. John says people make a choice about Jesus. They believe in HIS divinity or they

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reduce HIM to ordinary manhood, abandoning Biblical truth in the process. He says Jesus was living on a planet HE created, and that HE came to HIS own people who did not recognize HIM. Read JOHN 1:1-14 carefully...that there might be no question, that Jesus is God's own Son.

Let us pray;

Lord we live in a time when truth can be elusive, a time when we are tempted to think as Pilate did, "What is truth?" Does truth exist? Claim our hearts but also claim our minds, our souls and bodies. Grant that we might see through the carelessness of these times, and the carelessness of our culture. Lead us into the truth about Jesus, according to your Word. Amen