

The second beginning

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 March 2022

Preacher: Francis Dalrymple-Hamilton

[0 : 00] First of the words beginning attached to Genesis 1.1. And this week we move on to John's Gospel, where we read there from the first 14 verses.

John chapter 1, beginning at verse 1. Verse 1.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came for a testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. The true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, but the world did not know him. He came to his own home, and his own people did not receive him.

[1 : 46] But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become the children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only Son from the Father.

Amen. May the Lord bless us that redeeming may be to his praise and to his glory. In the Gospel of John, we are starting with eternity past.

Whereas Matthew and Luke will commence their Gospels by giving the circumstances and recording the fact of the virgin birth by means of the Virgin Mary, John goes further back than that.

And he shows that Jesus, the eternal word, existed before time began. So the person that we are meeting in this Gospel is the divine Son of God.

[3 : 03] Now, while that aspect is not missing from Matthew or Luke, here it's very much to the beginning. And it can be seen in a number of passages that we'll discover.

But here in the opening chapter, it is defined right at the beginning. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

How are we to understand this? Well, to begin with, there's a world of difference between the use of the word beginning in Genesis 1.1 and that of John 1.1.

We read in Genesis 1.1, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. So that beginning is the beginning of creation.

But the beginning here, in the beginning was the Word, is descriptive of eternity past, in which the purpose of God for this world was conceived.

[4 : 19] Now, if we ask what was this eternal Word doing in this eternity, the Gospel of John informs us that he was a co-creator.

All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made which was made. And you find that the way that God creates the world in Genesis 1 is by means of his Word.

God said, let there be light. And it is the eternal Word that brought this into being. If we turn to Paul in Colossians 1, he comes out with the same idea.

In him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities.

all things were created through him and for him. In the opening verses of the epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of Jesus, it says, through whom he also created the world.

[5 : 42] So here we are at this preexistent stage, right at the beginning of time, if indeed time has a beginning. And John in his Gospel refers to this.

And we find that in John 17, 5, Jesus himself comments on what this preexistence was like. Listen. Now, Father, you glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world came into being.

And there's a reference there that there is a trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And that trinity are rejoicing in the fellowship that they have with one another.

This is the greatness of the person that we find in John's Gospel, the eternal word. But the humanity of Jesus is not absent from John's Gospel.

You think of John chapter 11, Lazarus has died. Jesus stands outside the tomb and you get the shortest verse in the Bible.

[7 : 04] Jesus wept. And you can be sure that whoever you are or wherever you are, when there's a death of a loved one involved, the humanity of Jesus stands with you and he weeps.

But the greatness of the Gospel story is not just contained in the fact of his divine person. But he was prepared to leave all of this behind so he could bring salvation into the world.

Now we get this in John 10. Carol is spoken of the Good Shepherd. I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

And this is an intention that is in the person of Jesus in the beginning was the word.

You pick it up also in the book of Revelation where it says in Revelation 13.8 the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

[8 : 24] So here is an intention. Here is a purpose which God has created in this divine person. that he would leave the glory of heaven and come into this world to effect your salvation and mine.

You pick it up in some hymns one of which says before time began you were part of his plan.

So here is something really majestic really fantastic but in the mind of God your salvation and mine was planned.

Now how do we react to this? You find that Jesus in his ministry when he spoke of a parable he always said he who has ears to hear let him hear.

This means that you and I have a responsibility to listen to what God is saying and not just to listen but to act on it.

[9 : 43] Speaking personally before I come here I have to wait on God for the message to speak and I have a responsibility to it but I have to respond to it first before I ask you to respond to it.

So this is the eternity of the word. In the beginning was the word. The second point I want to talk about is the revelation of the word.

In verse 14 the word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. We have beheld his glory.

The glory as of the only son from the father. Now here John is trying to define what he sees has actually happened in what we call the incarnation.

The coming of Jesus as a human person for you and for me. Now to begin with this statement that he makes the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory.

[11 : 03] The glory is of the only son from the father. In today's language we would call that a testimony. It's how the person of Jesus has come into the life of John and he's able to think about it.

He's able to rejoice in it. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth and we have seen his glory.

Now John is writing his gospel about 1995 AD and he would have been staying at that time in Ephesus. And he looks back not just to the very beginning when he first saw Jesus but right through his ministry we have seen his glory.

So in other words what he's fundamentally saying is I have realized that Jesus is no ordinary man because in this person the glory of God was revealed.

Think back to the storm that occurred on the Sea of Galilee right at the beginning of his ministry. And Jesus is awoken and he says be still be calm.

[12 : 40] And there was a great calm. And the disciples they say to one another who is this that the wind and the sea actually obey him.

They're getting the message this is not an ordinary person. So we have his testimony. in the beginning was the word.

But he's not the only one who testifies. Consider the words of Simon Peter who wrote his second letter at a much earlier period about AD 65 and he has this to say we did not follow cleverly devised fanciful stories when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

What he's thinking about at the moment in that statement is when Jesus revealed himself Peter James and John what we call the mount of transfiguration and in this mount which you can read of in Matthew 17 and Mark 9 the person of Jesus was transformed and his clothing became glistening white such as no practitioner on earth was able to make it white.

and he not only they not only saw the Lord Jesus in this vision of glory but they also saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus about his forthcoming death.

[14 : 34] now all of this has been given to Peter James and John and Peter says we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

They made an important impact on the life of these people in such a way that they were prepared and in case some of them did lay down their lives for this glistening attractive dynamic person.

Now what we are talking about now happened to the disciples a long time ago. So what about us now in 2022? the same possibility exists through the ministry of God's word.

This is a medium by which God reveals himself to you and me. The apostle Paul has much to say about the value and it does have a value of the preaching of God's word.

God. And so to the church in Corinth he writes this, For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those that believe.

[16 : 21] In other words, through this simple preaching of the gospel, the simple preaching of the passion of Jesus, God can and will reveal himself to you and to me.

Now what's available for us is that we can look at the four gospels and we can read there the words of Jesus. These are not like reading a history book because the words of Jesus when read have the power to change your life.

Jesus himself said of his own words, the words I speak to you, they are spirit, they are life. And there's still life, there is still power, there is still forgiveness, there is still compassion, there is still mercy in the words of Jesus.

Because the fact is, it doesn't matter what you've done, there is forgiveness in and through the name of Jesus.

[17 : 44] We come finally to the reception of the word. He came to his own home and his own people did not receive him. But to all who received him who believed in his name, he became power to become the children of God.

So here is the challenge, the challenge that preaching the gospel gives. It is to be believed and at the same time received. In that scripture, there are two sets of reactions to the ministry of Jesus.

There is the rejection by those of his own people. And the second, the reaction of those who accepted his ministry.

Now, if we turn to Luke 4, where we get this visit by Jesus to the synagogue in Nazareth, where he had been brought up, what can we learn from that?

the opening verses. Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been brought up and he went to the synagogue as his custom was on the Sabbath day.

[19 : 00] And he stood up to read and it was given him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And this is what he read. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has appointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And when he finished he sat down and the eyes of all of them were looking at Jesus. What were they looking for?

Did they expect him to perform a miracle at this stage? Perhaps they thought he might tell a parable. But that's not what happened.

He said, today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. And then they go on and they say, is this not the son of Joseph?

[20 : 19] And they think about what's being said. And it doesn't match up with their perception. And that's the problem. The problem is that we as humans have a perception of what we think Jesus is like.

but he wants to challenge that perception and change it. But they weren't having it. We're not having this man to rule over us.

Truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. And they rose up and put him out of the city and led him to the brow on the hill in which the city was built that they might throw him down headlong.

But he passing through the midst of them went his way. So here is one set of people in that group in Nazareth who rejected who Jesus was.

In Luke 19 we get the reverse. Luke 19 deals of the conversion of Zacchaeus.

[21 : 39] Now it's a very important chapter of Luke 19 because here is somebody who is defined as being a tax superintendent and at the same time we're told that he was very rich.

It was the rule of tax collectors in first century Palestine that they were authorized by the Roman government to collect money and the money was stipulated.

But they all acted fraudulently and they added a bit more on for their own particular bank accounts. people and he had become rich through this terrible practice.

Because of this where he lived he would have been hated by everyone. He would have been a lonely individual.

Yet the chapter relates he sought to see who Jesus was but could not on account of the crowd because he was small of stature.

[22 : 54] Now why did he want to see Jesus? Had he heard the rumor that Jesus was the friend of tax collectors and sinners?

Perhaps. Anyway to achieve this he climbed a sycamore tree and the next action by Jesus shocked Zacchaeus with all the citizens of Jericho.

He came to the place and looked up and said to him Zacchaeus make haste to come down for I must stay at your home today.

The reaction of the people what's going on here? he's gone to stay with a man who's a classic sinner. What does Zacchaeus say?

He stands up and he says Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything I'll restore it fourfold.

[24 : 06] what does that mean? It means that to get peace of mind to get wholeness of being to get Jesus Christ into his life it costs him everything.

So Jesus says today salvation has come to this house since he also is a son of Abraham. On that day Jesus became the first friend that Zacchaeus ever had and he gave him a power not to collect taxes not to enrich his bank account he gave him a power to become a son of God.

So here it is. Here's this second beginning. In the beginning was the word and he had a profound effect on those that listened to him.

We've seen his glory. But he also had another effect to the people of Nazareth. He didn't match up to their expectations.

But the one he did match up to his expectations was Zacchaeus. He became a son of God.

[25 : 42] Through our preaching of the gospel it is no different. It is the same today as it was on the day when Jesus walked the earth. We pronounce the gospel.

We say here is Jesus the word. Accept him and he'll transform your life. Amen.

May God bless the ministry of his word. God the truth of your word and the truth of what we have sung and our response to the word and to the song is to say Jesus is my Lord.

God so we pray that your presence will go with us your word will encourage us and your spirit will guide us in Jesus name Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.