

Meeting Jesus

LEADERS NOTES

Week 3

There is quite a long passage to read this evening.

1. This is a big question that will probably produce a diversity of opinions. Some commentators do suggest that Jesus' comment in verse 14 implies that there was some particular problem that had led to the man invalided. The counterpoint will be provided in the passage we look at in the next study where Jesus specifically says that it was not the sin of the man born blind.

The general point is that sickness, death and such like entered through the fall.

2. This refers to the healing.

Revelation 21.4 points to this "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

4. Sometimes people speak as if God created the universe, wound it up and left it to run. The words of Jesus point to the fact that though God rested from the work of creation on the seventh day His work of providence is ongoing. Hebrews 1.3 for example states that the Son is "upholding all things by the word of His power".

We distinguish between the ordinary providence of God (such as Heb 1.3) which people might think of as the natural working of things, and his extraordinary or special providence of God which we tend to think of as miraculous. But these are simply different aspects of providence by which God is continually working.

5. Aside - The references to Jews in John's gospel are sometimes

said to be anti-semitic. Since Jesus and many of the disciples were Jews this was surely not true. But, like the word “British”, it is a bit of an elastic expression. It is related to the tribe of Judah but doesn’t seem to be used simply to mean that. Instead it seems to refer to the people of the Kingdom of Judah which came into being after the Israelites split following the death of Solomon. The term is particularly used in the time of the exile in the Old Testament, by which time the Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed and the a large percentage of the remaining Israelites were from the large tribe of Judah, and smaller tribe of Benjamin, plus many Levites and smaller numbers from the other 9 tribes.

John seems to use the term to refer to a strongly nationalistic outlook based particularly around Jerusalem. We see that the Jews despised the Samaritans and also seem to have looked down on Israelites from the north around Galilee. The term Jews is not found much in the other three gospels who concentrate mostly on Jesus’ ministry in the north around Galilee but in John, where the focus is on Jerusalem in Judea, the term Jews is used repeatedly.

6-8

I am hoping that the groups agree with the logic of these three questions.

In verse 18 Jesus is accused of breaking the Sabbath and making Himself equal to God.

Jesus does not deny working on the Sabbath but rather explains that He, like the Father, is always working.

Jesus definitely seems to make Himself equal to the Father - albeit in a Trinitarian sense.

So what they said about Jesus was true but what the Jews didn’t grasp was that it is true not because Jesus deluded but because He is precisely who they said He was claiming to be.

9. To marvel at greater things (v20), to give life (v21), not come into judgement but pass from death to life (v24), resurrection of life (v29).

10. Will therefore come into judgement (v24) raised to condemnation (v29).

11. All will be raised (v28). I think some people don’t realise this. But some are raised to life and others to condemnation (v29).

12. To do good in verse 29 must include accepting the Son of God. The greatest evil would seem to be to reject the Son who came to give us life.

13-15. The second part of the question and question 15 is intended to get people thinking about the nature of the evidence and how people accept it. As question 15 implies some people do weigh up the evidence and become convinced by it, others seem to just come to faith and then realise what the evidence points to.

The five I noted are:

Jesus himself (v31)

John the Baptist (v33)

Jesus’ works (v36)

the Father (v37)

and the Scriptures (v39).

To this we can add :

the Holy Spirit (Jn 15.26)

the disciples (Acts 1.8)

Paul (Acts 9.15)

all future disciples, including you.

*David Phillips,
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