

Listening Guide 1

March 9th 2018

John's Gospel 1.1- 2.11

Knowing Jesus

- as the eternal Son of God now incarnate
- as God come to us as man
- as announced and testified to by John the Baptist
- as the One who released us from external rules to living by his gift of life
- as He who moves us from Moses to grace
- as testified by our writer John, along with others
- who has a glory of an only Son of the Father, who sent Him
- in whom all the promises of God to Israel are brought to fruition.
- the Bridegroom who brings abundant life to his bride

A series conducted in 2018: from 7.00-8.30pm over seven Friday nights in the Leederville Town Hall, 84 Cambridge Street, West Leederville.

1st half of the Programme - John 1.1-18

⌘ The pre-existent Word of God takes flesh for our sake

- Word of God - He who is with God and is God. He was always there with God. Through Him God created all things. This is a Greek idea which is Christianised, set in a trinitarian and Hebrew setting.

Life who is light of men and women, who are in darkness.

- John the baptiser [1], - a disclaimer:
he is greatest OT figure who is not light but a witness to the light
- Was coming into the world [1] with a mixed reception
Reception of the incarnate Word turns out to be decisive:
 - Negatively
the world's reception
Israel's reception
 - Positively
both Jew and Gentile who did receive him
= believed in his name
- The incarnate Word gave them an authority [implies power]
to become children of God [knowing God as Father]
born not of natural descent, of human decision, of husband's will
but born of God = children of God
- Was coming into the world explained [2]
= the Word became flesh, made his dwelling [pitched
his tent] among us. God come to us as man.
- We have seen his [the incarnate Word's] glory
one and only Son who came from the Father
full of grace and truth
- John the baptiser [2], - testimony,
he comes [historically] after me
surpasses me because he was [in existence] before me
- We have all received from the fullness of his grace
- Moses mediates Law; Jesus Christ mediates grace and truth

That the Word takes flesh means that things with God now take place in real time. This is true while Jesus is upon the earth throughout his ministry and is still true now because to receive his Spirit is to have his risen life within us right now.

- No one has ever seen God, the one and only, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. A revelation of the Father through the Son

2nd half of the Programme - John 1.19-51; 2.1-11

⌘ John the baptiser's Testimony to Israel: [John 1.19-51]

- a matter of 'seeing' and 'testifying'
 - Who he is not: Christ, Elijah or the 'prophet'
 - Who he is: a voice in the desert make a straight path for the Lord [God]
- Why baptise? - because [1] among Israel is one they don't know,
 - He surpasses John the baptiser
 - Lamb of God** = takes away the sins of the world
 - because [2] I came baptising with water to reveal Him to

Israel

I came baptising with water, the Holy Spirit came on Him and remained: he will baptise in the Holy Spirit. Seen and testify concerning Him

Son of God

- Jesus' first disciples - were first John the Baptist's disciples
 - Rabbi** - where are you staying?
 - Messiah** [in Greek, **Christ**]. [Simon changed to Peter - a kingdom name]. He **of whom Moses wrote** in the law [Deuteronomy]
 - Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph**
- Nathaneal pre-seen before he and Jesus meet **appeal to experience**
 - Rabbi, Son of God, king of Israel**
 - Angels of God ascending and descending [Jacob's ladder between earth and heaven - a conduit a connection] on the **Son of man**
 - = Word made flesh/incarnate/enfleshed/ human.

⌘ Cana - a wedding, the 1st sign [John 2.1-11]

- A wedding is an entry of man and woman to a **shared/joint life**
 - Begins with a failure by the bridegroom to provide; a catastrophe.
- Water- for **ceremonial** washing [emphasises the felt need for purity, being clean]
- It is meant to **externally cleanse** defiled people who are aware of their impurities before they eat = share life together
- Wine - element of joy, fullness of the celebration of the life abundant and getting better and better [maturing of shared life] - the best for those practising external religion is now; when Jesus is the real bridegroom for his people - his bride.
- Water to wine is something Father does constantly. It is the work of the father, both in real life and also in Israel's history].
- First sign: a manifestation of glory of His person

Reflecting on the First Reading

What is to be my verdict on this testimony?

What we are reading is *testimony* - statements from reliable witness designed to authenticate what is spoken and, in this case, written. Our writer, John, is testifying about what he, and others have seen and heard. So he, and they, are telling this in respect of Jesus, the Word of God come in the flesh; Who they have come to share life with by receiving his Spirit. Jesus himself, in turn, is testifying about what He has seen and heard of his life with the Father. This is testimony that opens up how God may be known personally, such that we have access to Him and share in his Life.

Do I accept this word about a beginning?

The only *beginning* that we can know is our own coming into being - and this is the work of the God who made us, it is also the beginning of space and time, of our known history.

Can there be three Persons who are One?

That God was there, in his own Being, before we were made is made clear by an introduction of the *Word of God*, who is with God and is also God. This tells us that at least two Persons in the Godhead are introduced to us here. We learn that while God was not always Creator, He was always in relation to his Word.

Have I fully accepted that I am Someone's dependent creature?

This Word of God was God's *agent in the Creation* - all things, without exception, were made through Him. All things, ourselves included, have their origin and life from God through his Word. Later, this Gospel, through the revelation made by Jesus, will make clear that this is shared life of God and his Word is the life we can receive from the Father, and through the Son.

I know the world is dark. What reception shall I give Jesus?

Into a dark world, a fallen, rebellious world that has lost any love it shared with God, the Word has broken into the darkness of men and women. The sort of *reception* the Word received was, and is now, crucial to this fresh imparting for sharing of God's life now. For to receive a person as they have revealed themselves to be, is to share their life.

Can God really be personally known?

The taking of flesh meant that God was now with us, *making a revelation* of himself we can access. External religion now pointless because remote; intimacy is within.

God's forerunner to Jesus, what do I make of him?

God's first witness was *John the baptiser* in water. The disciples first heard of Jesus from him. So they believed his witness.

So many Jewish hopes; now hanging on the incarnate Word of God!

Then they met Jesus who *fulfilled all of Israel's prophetic hopes* and made sense of their historical journey with God who called them to know Him.

Glory is relational; I must learn how to see it!

These first disciples witnessed the full celebratory life Jesus brought to a poor marriage. They saw that his actions were endowed with power to do what God does. This was a *sign to them that showed his glory* in relation to God.