

Sermon- Jesus the Creator

Scripture: John 1:3-5

Sunday, October 04, 2015

Last Sunday we started on a journey through the Gospel of John and we looked at the opening verse of the prologue, verses 1 and 2 in which the Son of God is revealed as the one who existed even before time existed. Today we are going to work through the rest of the opening hymn of the prologue, verses 3-5. John here is presenting another fascinating truth about Jesus. That Jesus was the creator of all things. This is such an important truth that John repeats this assertion in the reverse way as well, “without Him, nothing was made that was made”. This is a concept that might challenge some of our assumptions, so let me work through the implications of our passage carefully. Last week we already noted that John 1:1 parallels Genesis 1:1 In the Beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth. Now the assumption that many people make is that the Old Testament revealed God the Father and the New Testament was a revelation of God the Son and also God the Holy Spirit. The opening verse of today’s passage is going to invert that assumption by revealing that the Creator God of Genesis 1:1 was none other than Jesus Christ Himself. This is not an idea that Apostle John came up with one day when he got too carried away, because you find this idea really everywhere you look in the New Testament. Look at the opening of Colossians. **Col 1:16 says**

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him"

Look at the opening of the book of Hebrews, Heb 1:1 and 2

"God. . . Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds"

Ephesians 3: 9 describes the unsearchable riches of Christ and I quote; ...which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" end quote.

The book of Romans 11:36 says this of Christ, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen"

First off, if Christ the Son was the God revealed in the Old Testament then you must be asking, where then do we see God the Father and what is the role of God the Father? I will answer that in a minute. But first, let me just point this out to you right now. The shocking inversion of assumptions about God in John 1:3 is this, if all things were created by Christ and for Christ, then the implication is this, whatever you have read about God and his activity in the Old Testament was actually the activity of the Son, Jesus Christ. Now let me address the "where then do we see God the Father in the Bible question". Well the only place where we ever see God the Father in the Bible, is when God the Son, reveals the Father to us in the Gospels. Without the Son we would never know anything

about the Father. This is such an important point that the prologue or our introduction to the Gospel of John ends in verse 18 with this very point, I am quoting from the NIV, No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

In fact you might find this interesting that the Jewish people never referred to God as Father except in this one prayer called Avinu Malkenu which means “Our Father, Our King” This one prayer was introduced into the Jewish festival of The Day of Atonement, 60 years after the time of Jesus.

Coming back to the idea of Jesus as the Creator God, there are some key philosophical issues that need to be understood to fully appreciate John 1:3 so let me set some of the philosophical context for us. The first philosophical issue stems from the original Greek word "egeneto" where our English translation “created” comes from. Now “egeneto” actually means “came into existence” or “emerged into existence”. This is actually a very big deal because what John 1:3 is declaring is that before this point, the universe did not exist at all and in fact absolutely nothing existed. And then Jesus Christ at the beginning of creation brought the universe into existence from absolutely nothing. This is a very radical idea because before John there was no religion or philosophical system that talked about a creation story where God created something out of nothing. As human beings we don't have any experience of this kind of creation because human creativity is all about taking some raw materials and giving it a new form. So when creation stories were writing in the ancient religions, there was always something there from which

everything else was created. People always thought that there was some unordered state of chaos existed and at the point of creation, the creator ordered the chaos into the physical world and everything we now see. In Hinduism one of the creation theories talks about a golden embryo from which everything emerged. But John 1:3 is very clear, that the Logos created the universe out of absolutely nothing. This is the power of Jesus Christ.

But there is a second aspect to John's creation account that it as radical as the idea of creation from nothing. But to appreciate this we have to once again look at the alternative creation theories. Last Sunday I had mentioned that John was writing his Gospel with one eye on the Gnostic philosophers of his time. Now the Gnostics had a specific creation theory and this is how it went. You see the Gnostics looked around the world and they saw that the world was full of evil. No surprise there! But the conclusion the gnostics came to from seeing this evil around them was that there is so much evil in our world, because the material or physical world is inherently evil. Now the question is this. If this world is inherently evil, then who made this world? How does God make a world that was inherently evil if God is inherently good? Now the way the Gnostics deal with this problem is by saying, the material world was made not by God at all but by a lesser being called the Demiurge. Now the Demiurge is many ranks lower than God, but you see the demiurge is an evil being. So the Gnostics dump the responsibility of creation on the demiurge and distance god from the act of creation. If you look at Hinduism you get some interesting creation theories as well. Now even though I mentioned the Hindu creation theory or the golden embryo, honestly Hindu creation theories are a little more

difficult to pin down because so many different theories exist sometimes in the same book itself. For example in the same Hindu sacred text called the Rig Veda, which talks about the golden embryo, you have this poem,

Who really knows, and who can swear,

How creation came, when or where!

Even gods came after creation's day,

Who really knows, who can truly say

When and how did creation start?

Did He do it? Or did He not?

Only He, up there, knows, maybe;

Or perhaps, not even He¹.

Now even with the golden embryo theory there are different versions. In one option, the creator god Bramaha is the golden egg. In some accounts they have two beings that come together and create the golden embryo from which all of creation comes out. In some versions they have the first being called Purusha who is a divine being who gets cut up by some other gods in a ceremony and different aspects of creation are made from the different body parts of the divine being of Purusha. But when you look at the common Hindu belief of reincarnation that most Hindus believe it in, that system has a creation account that says that the universe is billions of years old, that the souls of all creatures

¹ *Rig Veda 10.129.1-7*

are all preexistent forms of pure consciousness and that at some point these preexistent forms of consciousness gets put into a physical body on earth and that triggers an endless cycle of reincarnations. Now you will notice how even in Hinduism all the creation theories try to distance God from the responsibility of creating an evil world by claiming that the universe itself was preexistent and any evil you see in this lifetime ultimately gets worked on in a subsequent lifetime.... So when you look at a range of creation theories from those that John was dealing with to the Hindu philosophies that exist even today, one of the strangest things you find is that no philosopher wants to put the responsibility of the creation of human beings directly on God. It is almost like the philosophers are trying to protect God's reputation because surely God could not have created this messed up world. Given this context of the various creation theories, you can appreciate better the completely radical nature of the claim of John 1:3 that the Logos of God, who was fully God, made everything in this world, be it spiritual and physical. No exceptions. You see the God of the Bible is not afraid to take responsibility for creation even on those days where what happens here on earth is completely pathetic. You see the Logos of God taking responsibility for this messy world is radical enough that no human could have made it up and no human has. The Biblical account however is very clear, Jesus Christ was the Creator of this world, and He created it out of absolutely nothing.

At this point through we need to zoom out a little and view the set of verses from 3-5 because when you view these together, you see a pattern that bears an interesting similarity to the Genesis account of creation. Now so far we have been making

observations about verse 3 where Jesus is presented as the Creator of all things. Now in verse 4 you have Jesus presented as the one who caused all life to emerge. Finally in verse 5 you have Jesus as the light for humankind. So the pattern here is a three phase creation announcement, somewhat like the 6 day creation announcement in Genesis. In phase 1- all things were created, in phase 2- life emerged and in phase 3- human life had the benefit of Divine illumination.

Let's take a deeper look at the second and third phases of creations. So in the second phase in verse 4 we have these words "the Word gave life to everything that was created". Remember the Greek verb "egeneto" which means "bring into existence". Now the same verb "egeneto" is used in verse 4 rendering it, "Logos caused life to emerge in everything that was created". Just as on phase 1 now in phase 2 Logos is causing life to emerge where there was no life.

In phase 3 of creation, after the emergence of life, we have this phase in verse 4, "his life brought light to everyone". Now of course the "everyone" being referred to here is Greek word, Anthropos, which is referring to "all of humankind". So what John is saying in this phrase is from within all the living beings, the activity of Logos gave human beings this Divine illumination. A few things that need to be noted here. Firstly, note that this light or illumination is coming from the outside. This is clearly not something that is built into human beings. Human beings have the ability to discern and act on this light but human beings don't have this light within. This is an important point to note because many religions and humanistic philosophies will tell you that human beings are basically good

deep inside and you just have to look within yourself to find all the enlightenment you need. Well, the Bible is very clear that human beings at present are in a fallen state in desperate need for salvation. But in verse 4 we see Jesus shining his light on humankind and bestowing on humankind the ability to process this divine light. Now divine light helps you discern clearly what is right and wrong and also helps you find the path that God wants you to take in your life. This ability to process Divine Light is a unique human ability.

But there is one more thing that John wants you to know in verse 5. A property of Divine light is that it overcomes darkness. On the other hand darkness cannot overcome Divine light. This is another very important truth that is unique to the Bible. The truth is this, in this world there is light and darkness, good and evil. However good and evil are not mere opposites of each other like the Chinese concept of yin and yan, positive and negative energies that balance each other out. The Bible is clear about this and John chapter 1 verse 5 is very specific about the fact that the divine light is in no way matched by the darkness. In the presence of the light of Logos, the darkness has to flee. So the implication for human beings is that humans are not simply left with a choice between light and darkness as two alternatives from which they can choose one. No that is not what John is conveying here. John is saying that darkness is clearly the lesser, inferior choice when compared to the Light and this difference between light and darkness should be very evident to human beings at some level. Because human beings are not just bestowed

with life, but we, human beings are bestowed with light of divine illumination, to help us see way beyond the capacity of our physical eyes or even our imaginations.

Now you might be asking, how is this understanding of the inner workings of the Logos of God and the three phases of creation relevant to my life. Well, I think it is relevant to your life in three ways. Firstly, I think that all of us as believers need to be in love with God and completely awestruck by His awesomeness, because God is the most awesome being in the universe. But to appreciate the awesomeness of God you have to study His amazing revelation. It is kind of like this, when we hear a great piece of music like a Mozart Symphony, it may be enjoyable when you hear it. But you can never explore the real beauty of the piece unless you actually study music because only when you study it do you get to appreciate all the amazing features that Mozart worked into the piece that you will not find in the work of any other composer. So also with these passages in John, unless you explore the inner depths of meaning of the prologue of John's Gospel you will not be able to appreciate the awesomeness of God. And so hopefully this exploration of John is helping you fall in love with God.

The second thing I am hoping this exploration is doing for you is giving you specific things to talk about when it comes to understanding each person of the Trinity. Just in the first 5 verses of John, some very big philosophical questions about God have been answered. Questions like what the Son of God is like, how the world was created and what the nature of good and evil is. So when you are in conversation with people who hold different views, hopefully you have been equipped to give reasons for the hope that

you have. Finally, when life hits you hard as it does sometimes, then your health is bad and the strongest painkiller is not working or maybe your family seems to be crumbling in front of your eyes or maybe it's a national event like 911 where evil seems to be taking a long victory lap, remember that the words of John 1:5 are always true- the darkness has never overcome the light. Now you may not understand how, but in time you will know and it will all become clear. Remember the enemy of God thought he had his greatest victory when he managed to have the son of God beaten and nailed there to the cross. But what looked like victory for Satan was actually Satan's greatest defeat. And what looked like Christ's defeat was actually his greatest victory.

So hold on my friends to the words of John's prologue. Jesus Christ is the creator of all things and has even illuminated human consciousness with His light. So never let the darkness around you lead you to despair. Because God is Light. His light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it. Let us pray.