

Commentary on the Epistle to the John

written by Murray McLellan

The Gospel of John

Introductory comments (Part 2)

Before we embark on unpacking some of the great truths presented to us by the apostle, John, I would first of all like to thank Mr. D. A. Carson, whose commentary on the Gospel according to John was a source for many insights contained in the following exposition.

May God use the study of The Gospel of John to capture our attention and our affection - for this book is a testimony of Jesus Christ. It is a testimony of God's own Son given for sinners like you and like me. May we truly behold His glory as we study.

There are many applications that can be drawn from the texts of this great gospel. However, proper application relates to what that passage says about Jesus Christ. John's purpose is to testify of Jesus and His place in God's redemptive history. "... *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.*" (John 20:31) The "life" spoken of here is the promised life found in the promised Christ - the true Light that has come into the world (John 1:4-9). God set His light on a hill (ultimately on Mount Calvary) that the world might behold His light and glorify the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16). Indeed, as Jesus Himself stated, "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*" (Matt. 5:17)

Jesus said, "*I came...*" or as John puts it, "*The Word became flesh...*" He came not "*to destroy the Law or the Prophets...*" (i.e. not to annul; not to set aside one plan for another; not to destroy what was intended by the Law). In His coming, the intended design would not fail, but rather be fulfilled. Jesus came to build His church. This does not overthrow or set aside the purposes of the law, but rather fulfills it! The church of Jesus Christ is that kingdom glory of which the Law and the Psalms and the Prophets foretold!

The word "*fulfill*" means to "fill up" or to bring to completion. The Old Testament Scriptures were preparing the way for Christ, anticipating Him, pointing to Him, leading to Him. With His arrival, God's ultimate purposes expressed in the Scriptures are reached. In Christ they have reached their culmination - their fulfillment. Christ is the goal - the full measure of the accomplishment of the Divine purpose.

John writes that we might know God's purpose has reached its fulfillment and end in Christ - in Jesus who is God's Anointed One. Believe in Him and you will have the life and enter into His kingdom - His glory through suffering!

(See Acts 28:23-31 in which Paul preached the salvation/ kingdom/ blessing/ justification/ redemption promised to Israel in both the Law and the Prophets. See also Acts 18:18; 19:8; 26:15-23; Rom. 1:1-4. Also see Acts 2:16 and compare Acts 2:29-39 with 2 Sam. 7:11-13. In 2 Sam. 7, is Solomon being spoken of? Yes, but he is a type of the ultimate fulfillment in the Christ, who is Jesus.)

"It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience - concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9:9-12)

The "good things" have indeed come. Christ is the fulfillment of all the types. He is the Greater than Moses. He gave a greater law from a mountain. He performed greater miracles. He procured a greater deliverance. He gave bread in a desert place, picturing the true bread - Himself having come down from heaven. Truly He who built the house is greater and thus, Jesus Christ has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses! (Heb. 3:1-6)

Jesus is the one spoken of by Moses and pictured by Moses. With the coming of the Christ, Moses fades away as the fulfillment has come in all "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) Jesus is not merely parallel and illustrated by Moses, He transcends as He is the types realization.

Jesus is not merely another great Solomon. He is greater than Solomon (Matt. 12:42). He is greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6). Jesus is not just pictured by the temple, but He is its very fulfillment! He is greater than Jonah. He is David's greater son. He is Lord even of the Sabbath. Jesus is not merely a son of Abraham, as privileged as that is. He is the Son of Abraham - the One in whom all the promises reach their goal. He is not simply a representative of Israel, He is the true Israel. His name is Joshua, but He is greater than His forbear and brings a greater deliverance, "for He shall save His people from their sins." It would have been wrong on the Mount of Transfiguration to erect booths for Moses, Elijah, and Jesus as equals, for the two mere men, great as they were, deserve no equal place with the Christ. "Hear Him," was the word of God from heaven. He is greater than Elijah and greater than Moses. That is to say, Jesus is greater than the prophets

and even the law itself! Indeed, "for all the promises of God in Him are 'yes' and in Him, 'Amen' to the glory of God through us." (2 Cor. 1:20)