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# CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

## The Gospel of Saint John Dr. Timothy O'Donnell January 2012

AMDG

VERITAS

### Objectives:

These lectures will bring the attendees to a deeper appreciation of the historically reliable and inspired message of the disciple who was the most intimate with Jesus Christ and left us a first-hand, written account of his experience with the Lord. The gospel will give a deeper appreciation and insight into the mystery of the person of Our Lord and will reveal Saint John as the Evangelist of the Heart of Christ.

### Content:

To become familiar with the actual text of the gospel, particularly touching key points that would 1) demonstrate clearly the historicity of this gospel and that John himself was an eyewitness to these events; 2) set forth principal spiritual and theological themes found in this gospel and their application to daily living.

### Texts and Other Required Reading:

*The Gospel of Saint John*

### SYLLABUS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assigned Reading</i>
January 12	Prologue: "In the Beginning . . ." Seven Days of a New Creation <u>The Signs</u> : Christ's Outreach to Others	<i>Gospel</i> , ch. 1-4
January 19	<u>The Signs</u> , cont.: Old Feasts/New Feasts; The Bread of Life; The Water of Life; The King of Kingdom	<i>Gospel</i> , ch. 5-12
January 26	<u>The Glory</u> : The Last Supper and our High Priest; Last Discourses; The Passion Narrative; He is Risen!; Conclusion	<i>Gospel</i> , ch. 13-21



### III. JOANNINE SIGNATURE

- A. Almost entirely different from the Synoptics
- B. Style of Writing markedly Semitic [Nav JN 17].
  - 1. Vocabulary meagre...connective “kai”...poor grammar  
e.g. “He was in the world, and the world knew Him not...”  
(the Gk. equivalent of “but” would be better choice)
- C. Major focus is Judean Ministry
  - 1. CHAPTERS 1,2,3,4,5 [DECEMBER 27 AD TO LATE SPRING, 28 AD].  
“*meta tauta*”...[5,6,7]
  - 2. CHAPTER 6-----[PASSOVER 29 AD]  
{in Galilee}  
“*meta tauta*”
  - 3. CHAPTERS 7-21-----[FALL 29 AD TO SPRING 30 AD].
- D. Reports only 7 Miracles [The Book of Signs] -- No Parables!
  - 1. Cana [2]
  - 2. Son of Royal Official at Capernaum [4]
  - 3. Cure of Crippled man at Bethesda [5]
  - 4. Loaves [6]
  - 5. Walking on the Water [6]
  - 6. Man born Blind [9]
  - 7. Lazarus [11]
- E. The War/Conflict between:
 

1. Light [ <i>phos</i> ]	and darkness	[ <i>hamartia</i> ].
2. flesh [ <i>sarx</i> ]	and spirit	[ <i>pneuma</i> ]
3. glory [ <i>doxa</i> ]	and sin	[ <i>hamartia</i> ]
4. grace [ <i>charis</i> ]	and hatred	[ <i>misei</i> ]
5. Truth [ <i>aletheia</i> ]	and lies	[ <i>pseudos</i> ]
6. King. [ <i>basileia</i> ]	and World.	[ <i>kosmon</i> ]
7. Life [ <i>zoe</i> ]	and Death	[ <i>thanatos</i> ]



## THEOTOKOS ST. ATHANASIUS ON THE INCARNATION

The Apostle tells us: *The Word took to himself the sons of Abraham, and so had to be like his brothers in all things.* He had then to take a body like ours. This explains the fact of Mary's presence: she is to provide him with a body of his own, to be offered for our sake. Scripture records her giving birth, and says: *She wrapped him in swaddling clothes.* Her breasts, which fed him, were called blessed. Sacrifice was offered because the child was her firstborn. Gabriel used careful and prudent language when he announced his birth. He did not speak of "what will be born in you" to avoid the impression that a body would be introduced into her womb from outside; he spoke of "what will be born from you," so that we might know by faith that her child originated within her and from her.

By taking our nature and offering it in sacrifice, the Word was to destroy it completely and then invest it with his own nature, and so prompt the Apostle to say: *This corruptible body must put on incorruption; this mortal body must put on immortality.*

This was not done in outward show only, as some have imagined. This is not so. Our Savior truly became man, and from this has followed the salvation of man as a whole. Our salvation is in no way fictitious, nor does it apply only to the body. The salvation of the whole man, that is, of soul and body, has really been achieved in the Word himself.

What was born of Mary was therefore human by nature, in accordance with the inspired Scriptures, and the body of the Lord was a true body: It was a true body because it was the same as ours. Mary, you see, is our sister, for we are all born from Adam.

The words of Saint John: *The Word was made flesh,* bear the same meaning, as we may see from a similar turn of phrase in Saint Paul: *Christ was made a curse for our sake.* Man's body has acquired something great through its communion and union with the Word. From being mortal it has been made immortal; though it was a living body it has become a spiritual one; though it was made from the earth it has passed through the gates of heaven.

Even when the Word takes a body from Mary, the Trinity remains a Trinity, with neither increase nor decrease. It is for ever perfect. In the Trinity we acknowledge one Godhead, and thus one God, the Father of the Word, is proclaimed in the Church.



From a Discourse Against the Pagans by Saint Athanasius, bishop

(Nn. 42-43: Pxi 25, 83-87)

*The Word creates a divine harmony in creation*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made.* In these words John the theologian teaches that nothing exists or remains in being except in and through the Word.

Think of a musician tuning his lyre. By his skill he adjusts high notes to low and intermediate notes to the rest, and produces a series of harmonies. So too the wisdom of God holds the world like a lyre and joins things in the air to those on earth, and things in heaven to those in the air, and brings each part into harmony with the whole. By his decree and will he regulates them all to produce the beauty and harmony of a single, well-ordered universe. While remaining unchanged with his Father, he moves all creation by his unchanging nature, according to the Father's will. To everything he gives existence and life in accordance with its nature, and so creates a wonderful and truly divine harmony.

To illustrate this profound mystery, let us take the example of a choir of many singers. A choir is composed of a variety of men, women and children, of both old and young. Under the direction of one conductor, each sings in the way that is natural for him: men with men's voices, boys with boys' voices, old people with old voices, young people with young voices. Yet all of them produce a single harmony. Or consider the example of our soul. It moves our senses according to their several functions so that in the presence of a single object they all act simultaneously: the eye sees, the ear hears, the hand touches, the nose smells, the tongue tastes, and often the other parts of the body act as well as, for example, the feet may walk.

Although this is only a poor comparison, it gives some idea of how the whole universe is governed. The Word of God has but to give a gesture of command and everything falls into place; each creature performs its own proper function, and all together constitute one single harmonious order.

By his own wisdom and Word, who is our Lord and Savior Christ, the all-holy Father (whose excellence far exceeds that of any creature), like a skillful steersman guides to safety all creation, regulating and keeping it in being, as he judges right. It is right that creation should exist as he has made it and as we see it happening, because this is his will, which no one would deny. For if the movement of the universe were irrational, and the world rolled on in random fashion, one would be justified in disbelieving what we say. But if the world is founded on reason, wisdom and science, and is filled with orderly beauty, then it must owe its origin and order to none other than the Word of God.

He is God, the living and creative God of the universe, the Word of the good God, who is God in his own right. The Word is different from all created things: he is the unique Word belonging only to the good Father. This is the Word that created this whole world and enlightens it by his loving wisdom. He who is the good Word of the good Father produced the order in all creation, joining opposites together, and forming from them one harmonious sound. He is God, one and only-begotten, who proceeds in goodness from the Father as from the fountain of goodness, and gives order, direction and unity to creation.

By his eternal Word the Father created all things and implanted a nature in his creatures. He did not want to see them tossed about at the mercy of their own natures, and so be reduced to nothingness. But in his goodness he governs and sustains the whole of nature by his Word (who is himself also God), so that under the guidance, providence and ordering of that Word, the whole of nature might remain stable and coherent in his light. Nature was to share in the Father's Word, whose reality is true, and be helped by him to exist, for without him it would cease to be. For unless the Word, who is the very *image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*, kept it in existence it could not exist. For whatever exists, whether visible or invisible, remains in existence through him and in him, and he is also the head of the Church, as we are taught by the ministers of truth in their sacred writings.

The almighty and most holy Word of the Father pervades the whole of reality, everywhere unfolding his power and shining on all things visible and invisible. He sustains it all and binds it together in himself. He leaves nothing devoid of his power but gives life and keeps it in being throughout all of creation and in each individual creature.



# THE WORD MANIFESTED

SAINT HIPPOLYTUS – FROM A TREATISE AGAINST THE HERESY OF NOETUS, CAP 9-12:PG 10, 815-819

There is only one God, brethren, and we learn about him only from sacred Scripture. It is therefore our duty to become acquainted with what Scripture proclaims and to investigate its teachings thoroughly. We should believe them in the sense that the Father wills, thinking of the Son in the way the Father wills, and accepting the teaching he wills to give us with regard to the Holy Spirit. Sacred Scripture is God's gift to us and it should be understood in the way that he intends: we should not do violence to it by interpreting it according to our own preconceived ideas.

God was all alone and nothing existed but himself when he determined to create the world. He thought of it, willed it, spoke the word and so made it. It came into being instantaneously, exactly as he had willed. It is enough then for us to be aware of a single fact: nothing is coeternal with God. Apart from God there was simply nothing else. Yet although he was alone, he was manifold because he lacked neither reason, wisdom, power nor counsel. All things were in him and he himself was all. At a moment of his own choosing and in a manner determined by himself, God manifested his Word, and through him he made the whole universe.

When the Word was hidden within God himself he was invisible to the created world, but God made him visible. First God gave utterance to his voice, engendering light from light, and then he sent his own mind into the world as its Lord. Visible before to God alone and not to the world, God made him visible so that the world could be saved by seeing him. This mind that entered our world was made known as the Son of God. All things came into being through him; but he alone is begotten by the Father.

The Son gave us the law and the prophets, and he filled the prophets with the Holy Spirit to compel them to speak out. Inspired by the Father's power, they were to proclaim the Father's purpose and his will.

So the Word was made manifest, as Saint John declares when, summing up all the sayings of the prophets, he announces that this is the Word through whom the whole universe was made. He says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Through him all things came into being; not one thing was created without him.* And further on he adds: *The world was made through him, and yet the world did not know him. He entered his own creation, and his own did not receive him.*

+T+

## THE INCARNATION ST. AUGUSTINE [SAT BT 1/2 AND EPIPHANY]

Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal creator of all things, today became our Savior by being born of a mother. Of his own will he was born for us today, in time, so that he could lead us to his Father's eternity. God became man so that man might become God. The Lord of the angels became man today so that man could eat the bread of angels.

Today, the prophecy is fulfilled that said: *Pour down, heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just one: let the earth be opened and bring forth a savior.* The Lord who had created all things is himself now created, so that he who was lost would be found. Thus man, in the words of the psalmist, confesses: *Before I was humbled, I sinned.* Man sinned and became guilty; God is born a man to free man from his guilt. Man fell, but God descended; man fell miserably, but God descended mercifully; man fell through pride, God descended with his grace.

My brethren, what miracles! What prodigies! The laws of nature are changed in the case of man. God is born. A virgin becomes pregnant with man. The Word of God marries the woman who knows no man. She is now at the same time both mother and virgin. She becomes a mother, yet she remains a virgin. The virgin bears a son, yet she does not know man; she remains untouched, yet she is not barren. He alone was born without sin, for she bore him without the embrace of a man, not by the concupiscence of the flesh but by the obedience of the mind.



# THE SON REVEALS THE FATHER

[ST. ATHANASIUS: DISCOURSE AGAINST THE ARIANS ORATIO 2, 78. 81-2: PG 26, 311. 319]

The only-begotten Son, the Wisdom of God, created the entire universe. Scripture says: *You have made all things by your wisdom, and the earth is full of your creatures.* Yet simply to be was not enough: God also wanted his creatures to be good. That is why he was pleased that his own wisdom should descend to their level and impress upon each of them singly and upon all of them together a certain resemblance to their Model. It would then be manifest that God's creatures shared in his wisdom and that his works were worthy of him.

For as the word we speak is an image of the Word who is God's Son, so also is the wisdom implanted in us an image of the Wisdom who is God's Son. It gives us the ability to know and understand and so makes us capable of receiving him who is the all-creative Wisdom, through whom we can come to know the Father. *Whoever has the Son has the Father also,* Scripture says; and *Whoever receives me receives the One who sent me.* And so, since this image of the Wisdom of God has been produced in us and in all creatures, the true and creative Wisdom rightly takes to himself what applies to his image and says: *The Lord created me in his works.*

But because *the world was not wise enough to recognize God in his wisdom,* as we have explained it, God determined to save those who believe by means of the "foolish" message that we preach. Not wishing to be known any longer, as in former times, through the mere image and shadow of his wisdom existing in creatures, he caused the true Wisdom himself to take flesh, to become man, and to suffer death on the cross so that all who believed in him might be saved by faith.

Yet this was the same Wisdom of God who had in the beginning revealed himself and his Father through himself by means of his image in creatures (which is why Wisdom too is said to be created). Later, as John declares, that Wisdom, who is also the Word, became flesh, and after destroying the power of death and saving our race, he revealed himself and his Father through himself with greater clarity. *Grant, he prayed, that they may know you, the only true God; and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

So now the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God, since it is one and the same thing to know the Father through the Son, and to know the Son who comes from the Father: The Father rejoices in his Son, and with the same joy the Son delights in the Father and says: *I was his joy; every day I took delight in his presence.*