

2. For continuity and the progressive nature of the Lord's redemption work. (Not only in seeing the Lord in His resurrected body, but most important, hearing what He taught after His resurrection.)

## EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. TWENTY

### EPILOGUE

*John 21:1-25*

#### *Introduction*

- I. RECALL THE PROLOGUE IN OUTLINE
- II. RECALL THE MAIN BODY OF THE GOSPEL IN OUTLINE
- III. NOW LOOK AT THE EPILOGUE

An epilogue is not an afterthought but a restatement *in condensed form* of the whole drama. It is a recapitulation; a summation; a conclusion.

There are two main subjects treated in this epilogue which sum up the basic message of the fourth gospel; the revelation of the Incarnate Word and the response and commission of the disciples.

#### *Discussion*

- I. OMNIPOTENT LORD 21:1-14
  - A. Disciples in Galilee at His command to meet with Him there
  - B. Disciples fishing to support their discipleship
    1. They had not renounced their discipleship and reverted to worldly ways
    2. Jesus did not condemn them for fishing, but helped them
  - C. Christ reveals His glory
    1. By supernatural omniscience in knowing where to cast the net (and probably by commanding the fish to be there)
    2. By eating breakfast with them and showing the reality of His resurrection in the body
  - D. This last miracle recorded by John serves to recap the very theme of the whole drama recorded in his gospel—The Word Become Flesh and Demonstrating His Glory.
    1. His supernatural deeds and words and personality is the very bed-rock basis of our faith in Him
    2. The demonstration of His omnipotent majesty *had* caused the disciples to say:
      - a. "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life."
      - b. "My Lord and my God!"
    3. The gospel was written by eyewitnesses to bring us to the same faith and trust in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. It is not intended that we should have a reckless faith—our faith is founded on historical fact—but such a faith ought to cause reckless and wholehearted devotion such as Peter demonstrated in jumping into the sea and rushing to the Master's presence.

## II. OBEDIENT LOVE 21:15-23

- A. Christ always gives a basis for our loving Him and trusting Him
  1. His power and deity
  2. His compassion and concern
  3. His sacrificial love (We love Him because He first loved us)
  4. This generates faith and love and obedience on our part
- B. Peter challenged to love and obedience
  1. Christ challenged Peter to a stronger love by asking him three times. This pricked the conscience of Peter who had so boastfully declared "Even if all these deny thee, I will never deny thee" and then denied Him three times.
    - a. This was not to reconcile Peter to Jesus for this had already been done at the first appearance of Jesus to Peter
    - b. It was not to reinstate Peter as an apostle
    - c. It was to develop Peter's love and obedience and to show to the other disciples his place of leadership
  2. Jesus used both the Greek words, *agapae* and *phile* for love
    - a. *agapae* is a love of faith—including the intellect and the will and less of the purely emotional
    - b. *phile* is a love of personal warmth more from emotion than any other element.
    - c. A combination of both is the only type of love worthy of being given to Christ (see our comments on this section)
  3. Out of such love will grow service
    - a. Jesus challenged Peter to feed (*boske*) His "little lambs."
    - b. Jesus challenged Peter to tend (*poimaine*) His sheep.
    - c. Peter is commissioned to be a shepherd for the sheep—in fact he is told that he will lay down his life for the sheep just as the Good Shepherd had done.
  4. Peter was not to worry about another—to know times and seasons
- C. There is a great lesson here for us
  1. If we love Him we will keep His commandments

2. If we love Him we will feed His sheep and lambs
3. If we love Him we will be willing to lay down our lives for His church
4. We are not to compare ourselves with others (II Cor. 10:13-18). We ought not be concerned with the lot of others; we dare not be jealous; we need not be anxious over times and seasons; **WE ARE SIMPLY TO FOLLOW THE LEADING OF JESUS AS HE COMMANDS IN HIS WORD AND LEADS US BY HIS PROVIDENCE!**

### III. OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE 21:24-25

- A. John was an eyewitness and his testimony is true
  1. There are abundant extant manuscripts of this Fourth Gospel—some which were written within 50-100 years after the death of the apostle himself.
  2. History of the early church fathers tell us that John was an eyewitness to these events.
  3. His gospel agrees with but also supplements the other records.
- B. There were so many sayings of Jesus and so many deeds that it would have been impractical, if not impossible, to have recorded them all.
  1. The records we have are more than sufficient to bring all who will to faith in Christ and to regeneration
  2. We have the faith once for all delivered—let no man add to or take away.

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 19, 20 and 21

#### *Identify These*

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Gabbatha    | 4. The Pavement    |
| 2. Golgotha    | 5. sea of Tiberias |
| 3. Preparation | 6. Praetorium      |

#### *Describe These*

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Nicodemus            | 3. Mary Magdalene |
| 2. Joseph of Arimathaea | 4. Thomas         |

#### *Questions for Discussion*

1. Discuss the political implications and pressure brought to bear upon Pilate and his resultant decision to crucify Jesus.
2. Discuss the day and time of Christ's crucifixion and its bearing upon the harmony of all the accounts of His passion.
3. Discuss the way in which the gospel records recount the factuality of His death and its bearing upon the factuality of the resurrection.

4. Discuss the death of Christ as an atonement for our sins.
5. Discuss the meaning of the resurrection.
6. Discuss the purpose of the Fourth Gospel.
7. Discuss the relationship of Jesus' miracles to faith and faith to love and love to obedience.

### *List*

1. Ten prophecies fulfilled in connection with His crucifixion
2. Ten people mentioned in these three chapters
3. Five theories of the skeptics as to the empty tomb and resurrection and refute each one
4. Ten appearances of the risen Lord

### IN SUMMATION

There is so much we would like to say in summation. It has been a glorious experience. We are deeply grateful for editor Don DeWalt's patience. We hope this work, insufficient as it is, may be some reward for his kindness. We have chosen to quote from Dr. Merrill C. Tenney's, "New Testament Survey," as a summation to this whole work.

#### JOHN: THE GOSPEL OF BELIEF

"The structure of John's Gospel is so plain that its reader can hardly miss it. From beginning to end the theme of belief is followed consistently. Moreover, the Gospel is not an attempt to super-impose an artificial organization upon existing facts. The inspired writer has selected certain episodes and teachings which represent the character and progress of the revelation of God in Christ (1:10), and has arranged them in such a way as to sweep his reader along in the tide of spiritual movement toward an active confessional faith in Christ.

"The Prologue (1:1-18) begins by using the term *word* (Greek *logos*) to introduce the person of Christ. This term differs from those used in the other Gospels, for it does not connote any particular religious background. *Christ* is Jewish; *Lord* is Gentile; *Jesus* is human; but *Word* or *Logos* is philosophical. John thus makes the subject of his Gospel a universal figure, the incarnation of the Eternal Reason who is God, who came from God, and who reveals God as a son reveals a father. He is to be apprehended by those who receive Him (1:12), and the conflict between those who receive Him and those who do not is likened to the conflict between light and darkness.

"The Period of Consideration (1:19—4:54) presents the person of the Word made flesh as He appeared to His contemporaries and as He was received by them. First He is proclaimed in the witness of His forerunner, John, and in His dealing with John's disciples. His essential mission, "the Lamb of God (1:29)," and His method of appealing

to the needs and desires of His would-be followers connects Him with preceding history and revelation. He utilized both the preaching of John and the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament to establish His position. In the works which He performed He demonstrated His inherent power over things, over men, and over institutions (2:1-22). The interviews that followed were fuller manifestations of His sufficiency for all men. The learned and gentlemanly Jewish teacher, Nicodemus, the sharp-tongued and cynical Samaritan woman, and the importunate nobleman of Galilee, probably a Gentile, were all directed to faith in Jesus by different arguments and by different methods.

"From Jesus' public presentation of Himself arose controversy, for when He appealed to men to believe in Him, many refused. He did not ask for a blind or unreasoning faith, but He took care always to appeal to facts and to define clearly the issues at stake in belief and in unbelief.

"The healing of the man at the pool precipitated the Period of Controversy (5:1—6:71), because the miracle was performed on the Sabbath. Jesus indicated that His action was a sample of what His Father was continually doing, and thus tacitly claimed deity as His prerogative. In the discussion that followed (5:19-47) He argued for belief in Himself on the basis of five witnesses: Himself, the forerunner, the Father, the works which He had performed, and the Scripture. The miracles and the discourses that followed are bound closely together, for the discourse is only the amplification of the truth enacted in the miracles. The appeal for belief is very strong in this section, as if Jesus were desirous of having the disciples commit themselves to Him before the heat of controversy might alienate them from Him.

"The Period of Conflict (7:1—11:53) carries the trends of the Period of Controversy to their logical crisis. The growing through hesitant faith of the disciples is contrasted with the stark cynicism of Jesus' brethren, with the wavering allegiance of the bewildered multitude, and with the venomous opposition of the Jewish hierarchy. Jesus' own evaluation of the conflict appears in the history of the blind man, where He expressed the necessity of doing the works of God while He still had opportunity, and also in the raising of Lazarus, which He regarded as a supreme test of faith and as the climactic proof of His power. The discourse material which is included between these two miracles in the tenth chapter is Jesus' last extended public statement of His mission. It declares the purpose of His death as clearly as did His utterance to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi which is recorded in the Synoptics. The outcome of the conflict is predicted in His words; "I lay down my life, that I may take it again" (10:17).

"In the Period of Crisis (11:54—12:36a) appear the various tensions which the conflict has created. Jesus retired from Jerusalem and its environs to Ephraim in order that He might be out of the storm center. The feeling of His friends was openly declared by the family of Bethany, who gave a dinner in His honor (12:1-2). The pilgrim multitude, who was present in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, hailed Him enthusiastically (12:20-21). Jesus Himself realized that the die was cast, and removed Himself from public contacts (12:36). Divine destiny, not popular vote, was the deciding factor in His life.

"Up to this point Jesus' ministry was public; from here on it was private. The Period of Conference (12:36b—17:26) comprises the final instruction to the disciples after the Last Supper and also His prayer to the Father. The preparation of the disciples for the shock of the cross and the report to the Father that He had finished His work concluded the earthly ministry of Jesus.

"The Period of Consummation (18:1—20:31) brings the fulfillment of the two clashing principles of belief and of unbelief. In the betrayal and crucifixion unbelief was unmasked. The weakness of Peter, the treachery of Judas, the jealous malice of the priests, and the cowardice of Pilate show how unbelief reaches its ultimate end. On the other hand, the constancy of the beloved disciple and the women and the generous action of Joseph and of Nicodemus show how even an imperfect and uninstructed faith can maintain loyalty in spite of bewilderment and danger. The resurrection, of course, was the final justification of belief as well as the final vindication of the revelation through Jesus the Son of God."

Amen