

We want to see Jesus!

Theme passages

- John 1
- Hebrews 1:1-6
- John 12:20-24,27-32
- 1 John 4:12
- Self-expression...glory...incarnation

Introduction

- Might be the dissatisfaction with church and the enduring fascination with and love for Christ among non-Christians. Mick Jagger, Indian Poet Tagor, Gandhi, millions voting with their feet in the West, all saying one thing: Jesus, Yes; church, no....why?

Other observations on John 1

- Progression of God's self-revelation
- To "see" appears 16 times in John 1
- Other concepts: light, know, perceive, recognize,
- Creator becomes Creature becomes Criminal becomes Corpse becomes Crowned Cosmic King
- Contradictions and ironies in the chapter:
 - ♦ Witnessing to and understanding light (5,6)
 - ♦ Seeing the Word (14)
 - ♦ Knowing the Unseen (18)
- Jesus finds Philip; Philip "We have found Him."

Other principles on the theme

- God's self-expression always seems to yield glory
- God's greatest self-expression – Christ Incarnate
 - ♦ We beheld his glory: in the incarnation
 - ♦ "I have shared your glory with them" (John 17)
 - ♦ Compare: "My glory I will not share with another" (Is. 42:8)
 - ♦ "Son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being" (Heb. 1)
 - ♦ God's glory must not be associated with his non-moral attributes, as these were what Jesus suspended in the incarnation: "down from his glory" is somewhat of a misrepresentation

- God's greatest self-expression, his greatest revelation of glory is without omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence...but something utterly essential: love. God IS omniscience? Omnipresence? Omnipotence? NO. God is LOVE—by definition.

God is LOVE

- Why is our God LOVE by self-definition?
- This final point directs us to the uniqueness of our God. Many gods are sovereign, but our God is LOVE. Why is the Muslim God so brittle, harsh, and dispassionate? Because he is still only "One." There is no community in the Muslim deity. Our God is LOVE, in part because of his community in the Godhead.
- When Jesus prays "I in them and Thou in me...that the world may believe..." "May they be brought to complete unity..." he is really asking of the Christian community what has existed perfectly in the Trinity from eternity...LOVE. He had to come to earth to tell us this.

Christ and dispensations

- I am a dispensationalist of sorts:
- When Jesus said to the disciples: John 15:15 "I no longer call you servants—I call you friends, because everything I have learned from the Father I have made known to you."
- This is THE great dispensation divide! From slavery to friendship—with God Himself. God the communal, triune Being, is ushering us into the inner circle of his love and most intimate relating/knowing. (See John 17:24 Glory is communal and rooted in love)

Self-revelation

Ideas on self-revelation:

- Dad's letter to me about his own fear of self-exposure...but this is God-like behavior, to reveal oneself
 - 2 Cor. 3:18 self-exposure is essential in our relation with God and is like lowering gloves in a Greek boxing match, lowering the guard
- What has God been doing throughout HIS-story? Peeling back layers of his hiddenness to us, and finally, exactly with his Son

Names and descriptors for Christ in John 1

Word (vs. voice)...	1
God...	2
Maker...	3
Life...	4
The (true) light, which enlightens everyone...	4-8
Unrecognized; unaccepted...	11
Flesh...	14
Coming from father...	14
Full of, bearer of grace & truth...	14,17
Successor, Superior, Predecessor...	15
Jesus Christ...	17
God the One and only...	18
Close to the Father's heart...	18
God's interpreter/revealer...	18
The Lord...	23
One among you; not known by you...	26
Lamb of God... (world's sinbearer)	29
A man...	30
Spirit-baptizer...	33
Rabbi...	38,49
Messiah...	20,25,41
Son of God...	34,49
King of Israel...	49
One written about...	45
Jesus of Nazareth...	45
Son of Joseph...	45
Heaven's gate...	51

John seems obsessed

- John 1 is all about this self-disclosure-
- SEEING mentioned, alluded to 16 times
- Other words:
 - ◆ Knowing
 - ◆ Recognizing
 - ◆ Revealing
 - ◆ "Behold"

3 principles in History on God

- God remains invisible to human sight
- Humanity's craze for God-made-visible
- God's intent to be made visible—"by other means"

The horrible irony of this is that if God were to reveal his glory directly to us, it would destroy us;
But when He does provide an adequate means of fully representing Himself to us—without destroying us, what do we do? We destroy it!

John's repeated contradiction

- John 1:18 no man has ever seen
 - 1 John 4: no man has ever seen
- both verses are constructed to hold the same internal contradiction
The invisible becomes visible by other means

There is a revelational hierarchy

- What is God's most clear self-disclosure? without debate in scripture
Heb. 1
Many penultimate revelations; only one ultimate one in this age: advent
- When Moses said "Now show me Your glory;" it was God's face that he was after--

What is Occurring in the Incarnation?

- ❖ Creator becomes Creature, becomes Criminal, becomes Corpse, becomes Cosmic Crowned King
- ❖ Cosmic relay: Christ is passing a cosmic baton to the disciples which includes everything he brings us from the Father
 - All authority, Life, Words, YES, GLORY

Another irony/contradiction of Scripture:

Is. 42:8 My glory I will not give to another

John 17:22 I have given them the glory you gave me

Maker of the Universe poem

The Maker of the universe, as man for man was made a curse
The claims of law, which he had made, unto the uttermost he paid
His holy fingers made the bough, which grew the thorns that crown'd his brow
The nails that pierced his hands were mined in secret places he designed
He made the forest whence there sprung the tree on which his body hung
He died upon a cross of wood, yet made the hill on which it stood.

The sky that darkened o'er his head by him above the earth was spread
The sun that hid from him his face by his decree was poised in space
The spear which spilled his precious blood was tempered in the fires of God
The tomb in which his form was laid was hewn of rocks his hands had made.
The throne on which he now appears was his from everlasting years.
But a new glory crowns his brow and every knee to him shall bow.

When God chooses to self-disclose, what do we get? glory!

- Is 6, Shekinah of OT--temple, where the locus of God's visitation was: temple
Looking back in John's gospel and the implications of God's self-disclosure...
GLORY ...we have seen his glory. Jesus was the new temple
- Interesting note on the Temple: Jesus, jealous for God's house (it consumed him), drives out the money-changers, declaring THIS IS TO BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR PANTA TA ETHNE—ALL THE NATIONS. But a minute later, when asked regarding the authority he had to do these things, virtually blasphemes the temple—Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up. Of course he's speaking of his BODY, not the physical temple. But prophetically he is foreshadowing the destruction of the temple and the end of the Old covenant temple model, replaced by his Body. Since in the NT, the Church becomes the temple of God, he tabernacles in places NOT made of human hands. And for this claim Stephen lost his life.
- It's interesting to hear top-level evangelical leaders saying that the societies in which we work have their religious "houses" temples, etc., so converts somehow require a "dynamic equivalent" in the form of church edifices. I think Stephen dealt that thinking a death-blow in his own martyrdom.

What is God's glory?

- ❖ In a sense the answer is in Moses' intense encounter with God, in which he specifically asks to SEE God's glory. (Ex. 33:20) God's response is: You cannot see my face and live (whereas we know we cannot NOT see God's face and live!); so God then says that he will make ALL OF HIS GOODNESS to pass before Moses. It was this experience which lit up the countenance of Moses and caused the people to hide their faces from him. In a very real sense, God's glory, splendor, majesty is his goodness (not some transcendent inaccessibility).
- ❖ This has direct correspondence to the seeing of God's glory in the incarnate Christ, as well as our final lesson here, that the glory of God is in the church, Christ's earthly BODY, the continuation of the incarnation.

Jesus' "moment of glory"

- As John unfolds the story of Jesus, we see an interesting phrase concerning "my hour" --and always the postponement of the coming of "my hour" or "my time" John 2--not yet come, and yet through the changing of water to wine, he 'began to show his glory.' When did "my hour" really arrive? John 12...and what prompted Jesus to say that his hour had come? when the Greeks came into Jerusalem at the time of the feast in the third year of his ministry and told Andrew, We wanna SEE this Jesus of yours! BOOM; my hour has arrived--the world is knocking on the door, a world which Jesus could not physically disciple, but which his "BODY" could. If I be lifted up, I'll draw ALL to myself.

Now, what of the age following Jesus' departure?

When Jesus ascended to heaven, what did he leave behind?

Spirit! But a body-less spirit is a ghost!

A spirit-less body is a corpse!

He left his body and his spirit—

his incarnation is the church, the dwelling place of his shekinah glory...yet greater.

Jesus said a spirit seeks a body in which to dwell...Is it inappropriate to think along the same lines in the Holy Spirit's work?

A theology of re-incarnation

- Now, back to our thesis of the God invisible and his project to be made visible. We did indeed see his glory. But in leaving his body and spirit behind, did he short-change his self-revelation?
- 2 Cor. 3 seems to indicate otherwise; there is a greater glory at work in the church age than in the OT temple period. The temple of God is now the incarnation of Christ, the Church. The New Covenant and the new Temple together make for a greater glory

Mistaken for Jesus

- Jesus made it very clear that this was the best program in order that God's glory would be known world-wide.
- But this glory of God is mediated through one primary thing: love. How will the world see the glory of God? through the love of Christ.
- In fact, the church is not really the Body of Christ where it does not manifest the lavish, life-laying-down nature of Christ. The whole point is that we be mistaken for Christ.
- Which NT church would be least likely to be mistaken for Jesus? Corinth? NOW YOU are the Body of Christ... (12) Paul, these are the Corinthians!

Illustration

- Story of the child in the train station. Businessman, racing to work, late, in a N.Y. subway, unwittingly bumps a little girl carrying a big bag of groceries...they spill all over the station floor. Split-second, he has to decide whether to be late to work and help her or ignore her need and "make it." He reluctantly turns round, stoops and picks up the entire bag of spilled items, returns them to the girl, who has been gazing at the man the whole time.
- "Sir, are you Jesus?" she said. Ignorant, she did not know how to recognize Jesus.
- We must find a way for the church local to be mistaken for Jesus in this age.

What has come of us?

Corporate nature of the Body vs. the highly individualized version of the faith in post-war evangelicalism.

Visible nature of the NT church vs. the invisible, inaccessible version of four-walled Christianity in most places

Marks of the Body: How God is seen

- It took a Body for the unseen God to be seen Jn.1:14
- New Commandment (back to John 12,13,14)..by this will all men know...
- John 17 prayer: ..Unity: that the world...
- 1 John 4: If we love one another, God lives in us (Unseen is seen)--
-in other words, it still takes a BODY for the unseen God to be seen.
- No doctrinal statement have I seen which requires people to believe fully in the greatest and New Commandment Jesus gave, the only final trademark of NT Christianity, the mark of the church: fervent love for the Brethren. We pass it over as elementary, "Of course, everyone believes that!" And maybe this is why the world still waits to come into the Church.
- In the modern era, the same is still true: the WORD must become FLESH. We have so preached the gospel devoid of proofs:
 - Proofs are charismatic: signs and wonders
 - Proofs are holistic: sacrifice
 - Proofs are costly: suffering