

THE REASON BEHIND REALITY

Author Robert Frost summed up all he had learned about life in three words, "life goes on" – and indeed it does. There are no time outs or half times in life. Life never takes a break to let you catch your breath. Life goes on.

The key to fulfillment though is to find some meaning in life along the journey.

The ancient Greeks saw that nature operates according to universal laws.

They concluded there had to be a master plan – a kind of logic or intelligent force responsible for the order and symmetry. They coined a term for this ultimate purpose... they called it *the logos* - or as translated into English, "*the word*".

And the preoccupation of Greek philosophy was to identify the *logos* – the *word* - the *ultimate reason behind reality*. In essence, they read the world around them to pick up on some expression of this unseen purpose behind the seeable world.

Despite their great wisdom, all the great

Greek philosophers failed to answer this ultimate question. Their wisdom is summed up in the words of the man who quoted Robert Frost, then added a phrase, "Life goes on... I just forgot why."

The Apostle John wrote to a Greek audience, and in the very first chapter he answers the question that had stumped their famed philosophers for centuries.

John has good news! The Word has been heard! The unseen is revealed! There is a God, and He has made known His nature in a Word... The *logos* the Greeks were searching for was not a *primal force*, but a *person named Jesus*.

Jesus is *the reason behind reality* - the *logos behind the cosmos*. Jesus is the residence of absolute truth - of undiluted love - of eternal life. *Life goes on... and it's all about Jesus!* Come to Jesus, and you'll find the purpose for *your* life!

GOD IN THE HOOD

The Greeks looked behind the cosmos for the unseen cause. It was as if the Logos had created the universe then gone into hiding. But John says Jesus not only created the physical universe, He joined its plight and predicament.

Verse 14 tells us, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Greek word "dwelt" means "*to pitch a tent*".

I love how Peterson paraphrases verse 14, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." God moved to the hood. He stepped out of heaven and slipped into our shoes! He now understands us in a new way.

He cries when we cry - laughs when we laugh - bleeds when we bleed.

Devotion Box - Who's Disciple Are You?

John 1:18 reveals a primary aspect of Jesus' mission, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." Jesus revealed the Father's intentions and declared His nature. And verse 17 describes the nature Jesus revealed, "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." In the Law, God revealed His righteousness and justice – but through Jesus He revealed a love too expensive to be earned.

Moses says *don't cross that line...* Jesus says *I'll bear the cross for you*. Moses says *let's go toe to toe...* Jesus says *why don't we go arm in arm*. Moses says *you better not...* Jesus says *trust Me, and I'll make you better*. Moses says *you don't deserve God's blessing...* Jesus serves up a *blessing we don't deserve*.

"Grace is love that's on the house" – and it comes through Jesus.

If you want justice see Moses... but if you need mercy call on Jesus! Who's disciple are you... who do you follow... Moses? or Jesus? Do you follow a set of rules or do you follow a person, Jesus Christ?

GRACE IS LOVE THAT IS ON THE HOUSE!

OUT OF A TRUCK STOP

When Jesus called Philip to be His disciple, Philip in turn spoke to Nathaniel. Verse 45 records Philip's witness, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph..."

Nathaniel was skeptical. He knew of Nazareth's seedy reputation. The town set at the crossroads of several caravan routes. It had the flavor of a truck stop. It was the kind of town you'd expect to produce a *son-of-a-gun... not the Son of God*. That's why Nathaniel scoffed, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

But I love Philip's response, "Come and see." Nathaniel was a skeptic, but an honest, open-minded skeptic. When Jesus told him where he'd been before Philip found him - information impossible for Jesus to have known... Nathaniel believed.

Nathaniel was impressed by Jesus' supernatural knowledge - but in essence Jesus tells him, "*You ain't seen nothing yet.*" He tells him in verse 51, "hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." It was reference to Genesis 28, and Jacob's ladder. Jesus is telling Nathaniel that He will become the ladder from God to man.

Here's a quick summary of John 1: Jesus is *the logos, the life, the light, the lamb, the ladder*. He'll be all that to you, and more, if you'll trust your life to Him.

Devotion Box - Let Jesus Turn Your Water Into Wine

Jesus tells the servants at the wedding to fill six water-pots with water, then dip in and serve their master a drink. What had gone in as water was poured out as wine.

A molecular miracle had taken place!

And we know it was real wine from the master's comment in verse 10. Usually the good wine was poured first - then once the crowd was a little tipsy they served the cheap stuff. But just the opposite occurred. Jesus saved the best to last.

Guys, Jesus is still in the business of turning water to wine. He can take the mundane, boring, drab duties of everyday life, and suddenly make them sweet. Has your life been infected with boredom?

It reminds me of the airline flight where the attendant announced, "For lunch today's you'll have a choice of chicken Marengo, beef burritos, of fruit salad." Then she commented, "And if you don't get your first choice, please don't be distressed. All our entrees taste very much the same."

After a while that's what happens in life - it all starts to taste the same. Experiences become blah.

Devotion Box - It's Not About You

John the Baptist paved the way for Jesus' ministry. In 1:23 John quotes Isaiah 40:3 to define His ministry. He calls himself "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the LORD..."

John is saying I'm just a voice - not a star or a famous personality. I'm not a guy - I'm just a cry. John is saying this is not about me - it's all about Jesus. In 1:27 John says of Jesus... "His sandal strap I am not worthy to loose." Is this your attitude? Guys, your life is a gift from God. It's not about you. Don't be just another guy... be a cry for Jesus Christ.

A TEMPLE OR A TARGET ?

The Jewish leaders had turned the *temple* into a *Target*. They were selling marked-up sacrifices. You prohibited secular shekels, and made the people pay their tithes with temple token - and of course, there was a fee for the exchange. In short, the Jews were making a buck off God, and Jesus had enough.

Jesus took a cat' o nine tails - and literally, whipped the place into shape.

If Jesus were to brandish His whip again, I wonder how many churches would get whipped into shape. When the church's motive is to pad its coffers rather than offer real help and ministry to the people, then it needs to be cleaned up.

Pleasures become bland. It's the same ol' same ol. Life tastes like water.

But Jesus turns the water into wine by fermenting our lives with the Holy Spirit. He lifts us out of the rut, and turns life into an adventure. He replaces our blahs, with His supernatural bubbly. Jesus can restore the sparkle and flavor.

Devotion Box - A Reminder For Your Marriage

Remember too, where this miracle first took place... it was at a wedding. Perhaps you feel stuck in a boring marriage. Holy matrimony has turned into holy monotony. It's been said, "Marriage is like a violin - after the music stops the strings are still attached." Is there any hope for a boring marriage? You bet there is...

Jesus can spice up your marriage just like He did the wedding at Cana.

Remember who you both serve - get on your knees - and just like the servants in the story, do what Jesus tells you to do. Let Jesus turn your water into wine...

NICK - AT - NIGHT

In John 3 we tune in to the original Nick-at-Nite. A rabbi named Nicodemus visits Jesus under the cover of darkness - in pursuit of more light.

Understand, Nicodemus was a Jewish scholar, schooled in the Old Testament Scriptures. He had read of the covenant God made to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and to the Jews who came back from Babylon. God promised to return the Jews to the land - regenerate or revive their hearts - then reestablish His kingdom to Israel.

Return them logistically. Regenerate them spiritually. Restore them politically.

In Nicodemus' mind the first two promises had been fulfilled. The Jews had returned, and He'd mistaken the legalistic fervor of the Pharisees as a revival.

In his thinking the next step was for God to reestablish the kingdom politically... But Jesus slows him down. Yes, the Jews have returned, but they still lack a regenerate heart. He challenges Nick's understanding in verse 3, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus says to be a part of God's Kingdom you must be born again. At first, Nick assumes Jesus' is talking about a natural, physical birth - but not so, He's talking about a supernatural, spiritual birth. The Old Testament promised the Holy Spirit would come, and like water, cleanse man's sinful spirit.

In verse 10 Jesus gently rebukes Nicodemus - these are truths he should've known. "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?" Jesus has just given Israel's greatest Bible teacher a vital Bible lesson he had overlooked

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

In chapter 4, Jesus passes through Samaria... It's noon. The sun is hot. Jesus has been hoofing it all morning, and His dogs need a break. He sits by a watering hole, while His disciples go for bagels. Suddenly up walks a Samaritan woman who's come to the well to draw water.

Understand, the Jews and Samaritans despised each other, and lived segregated lives. The Samaritans were a mixture of Jew and Gentile. The hatred ran so deep that Jews didn't even talk to Samaritans - which is why it surprised the woman that Jesus asked her for a drink.

This woman is even more surprised when Jesus offers her a drink... but Jesus has a different type of water. He offers her living water - spirit water. The water from the well will moisten a parched throat for a few hours, but that same throat will thirst again. Jesus has water that can quench a deeper thirst. The Holy Spirit can moisten a parched soul, and keep it satisfied for all eternity. One drink satisfies our deepest needs.

Let me ask, *what are you drinking tonight?* Is your cup full of possessions, pleasures, prestige, ambition? Truth in advertising should require a disclaimer on all ads and commercials. Jesus' words in verse 13 should be clearly seen, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again."

Get what you want... but when you get it, you'll want more. Spiritual needs are never satisfied with physical stuff. Jesus alone can quench a thirsty soul. Listen to the Sprite commercial, "Obey Your Thirst." Go to Jesus for a drink of living water.

This woman is tracking with Jesus until he tells her in verse 16, "Go, call your husband, and come here." He hits a nerve. She snaps back, "I have no husband." Verse 17, "Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, I have no husband, for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.'" This grabbed her attention - *how did a stranger that about me.* "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.'"

She's been found out. Her sin's been exposed. So she tries to change the subject by bringing up a thorny theological question. This seems to always happen when the conversation becomes personal.

You're talking to a person about Jesus, and the truth begins to strike a nerve, that's when the guy or gal will bring up some obscure theological dilemma... *"I know I'm a sinner... but oh by the way, can God really create a rock He can't move?"*

The woman wants to know whether God is to be worshipped on Mount Gerizim in Samaria, or on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. This was another contested issue that separated Samaritans and Jews. The right answer was Mount Moriah, but Jesus points out that it was an irrelevant answer. It was all about to change...

In the Old Testament worship involved logistics - when and where mattered. But Jesus changed all that - His followers worship God in the plain and on the mountain - anytime and anywhere. Worship today is about *attitude*, not *altitude*. Two things characterize real worship - spirit and truth - *personal contact* and *biblical content*. True worship is *subjective experience* grounded in *objective truth*.

In verse 25 Jesus tells the woman that He is the Messiah. And notice how she responds, the woman who came to the well at noontime in an attempt to avoid people, now runs into town to bring people to Jesus. She says in verse 29, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did..." Verse 39 says many believed because of her testimony

Bible Scan - John 1-6

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Wednesday 7:30: Chuck Smith; Thursday 7:30: Gayle Erwin; Deep South Pastors and Church Leaders Conference, January 16-18, If you can help see Pastor Bob—Ladies Bible Study in Isaiah, "Breaking Free", Tuesdays: 9:45 AM and 7:30 PM, sign-ups begin today—Film: "Israel, Islam, and Armageddon", Sunday 6:30 PM, January 27 - Next Bible Scan - February 3, 2002 - John 1-6

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." - John 3:16-17

Bible Scan
Memory
Verse

Devotion Box - At The Pool Of Bethesda

The public pool at Bethesda was regarded as a place of supernatural healing. The crippled and infirmed would lay by the pool hoping for a divine miracle. John 5:4 says an angel would stir the water, and the first person in was healed. Evidently this had actually happened on occasion... but the occasions had been rare.

On Jesus' visit to the pool he approached a man who'd been lame for 38 years, and asks what at first seems to be a silly question. Jesus asks in verse 6, "Do you want to be made well?" Of course he does, that's why he's sitting by the pool. But look at his response, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." I'm sure in the beginning he desired to be healed, but all he musters now is excuses. He has not plan to remedy the problem. He's accepted his condition. He's found it's easy to adapt and live with the problem, than to overcome.

And this lame man is not alone. There are many people who've capitulated to their problems. They've given up hope of a cure. They've hidden their lack of faith behind a host of excuses, and have decided to live with less than God's best.

Jesus cuts to the chase. Forget about the angel and the pool. Jesus says to him, "Rise, take up you bed and walk." Again, Jesus makes an impossible command. How can a bedridden man... rise, take up his bed, and walk? Understand, *the man's willingness to try unleashed the power he needed.* It never happens in reverse. Don't say, "When God gives me the power, then I'll try." No, *have faith enough to try, and God will meet you with the power.* Believe the unbelievable! God will give the grace to see it accomplished.

NO MEAL TICKET

Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and fish is the backdrop for the dialogue in John 6:26. Jesus points out that to most people He was just a meal ticket. They followed His miracles, not Him.

Bread and circus was Rome's formula for keeping the masses happy. There were 93 Roman holidays a year. It was cheaper to entertain than put down revolts. It was also an indictment against the superficial tastes of its citizens.

But this *bread and circus mentality* still persists... Some believers serve Jesus for what they can get out of Him - rather than for Who He is! Let a slick preacher stand up and say, "Jesus wants to make you rich and happy and successful" - and people will follow him like the rats followed the pied piper. It's tragic. God wants us to serve Him... but with no strings attached.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

In John 6:35 Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." In the ancient world bread was the staple of life. Jesus is saying that He contains all the nutrients, fiber, minerals, protein, and vitamins we'll ever need. Feed on Him. He'll be to you a source of strength and satisfaction.

In verse 56 Jesus says, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." This was tough talk for a typical Jew to stomach. The Law forbid eating flesh and drinking blood. Jesus uses difficult language to separate the serious followers from the fickle crowd. For people only concerned with filling their bellies with food - such talk was disgusting; but for those who wanted to feed a spiritual hunger - Jesus' words were an answer to their spiritual emptiness.

Afterwards, Jesus quizzes His disciples... Now that they know the free lunches are over will they still follow Him? Verse 66 says that some failed the test, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."

Jesus' words are spirit and life - they feed the soul, like bread feeds the belly. But here's the question, *Are you hungry for what Jesus offers?* Materialism is not on the menu. Jesus serves up spiritual growth, and strength, and satisfaction.

Verse 67, "Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" Here's a moment of truth. Are the 12 among the fickle, or the true followers? I love Peter response, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." If you want the best food, Jesus is the only place to eat.