

## UNIT 2: “In These Last Days”

### I. LOOKING BACK

- A. Studying Jesus is vital for our sanctification (2 Cor. 3:18).
- B. Our “theology” of Jesus affects every other doctrine we have.
- C. We are going to look through the four “windows” of the Gospels at Jesus as revelation and role-model.

### II. JESUS: REVEALER AND REVELATION

#### A. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: Jesus as Revealer

- 1. God told Moses that no one could see Him face to face and live (Ex. 33:20).
- 2. This hasn’t changed. Paul said the same thing nearly 1,500 years *after* Moses (1 Tim. 6:15-16).
- 3. Jesus made it clear that only He could “unveil” (i.e. “reveal”) the unseen, unapproachable God to the world of people. (Matt. 11:27).
- 4. John tells us that’s exactly what Jesus has done:

*“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” – John 1:18*

- a. The word translated “made him known” (NIV,ESV) is the Greek verb *exegeomai*, from which our word, “exegetis” comes.
- b. It means “to explain in detail,” or “to interpret.”
- c. It was used for Paul’s “report” to the Church when he returned from his missionary journeys (Acts 25:12,14; 21:19), and the two men “telling” their story about seeing Jesus near Emmaus (Lk. 24:35).
- 5. John also tell us *how* Jesus “exegeted” God:

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word became flesh and **dwelt** among us, and we have seen his **glory**, **glory** as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1,14*

- a. The word “dwelt” (*skenaō*) is used for the Tabernacle in the Greek Old Testament. It means “to pitch a tent.”
- b. The word, “glory,” (*doxa*) is used in the Greek Old Testament for God’s presence in the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:9; 26:6 and 16:10; 24:16).
- c. John tells us that Jesus of Nazareth was the habitation of the glory of the God of Israel!
- d. Jesus himself said something no Jew ever dreamt he would hear:

*“Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” – John 14:9*

6. The author of the Book of Hebrews helps us understand what this means:

*“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.” – Hebrews 1:1-4*

- a. The variegated, perforated, and abbreviated revelation of God’s will of “long ago,” is a closed chapter. **–vs. 1**
- b. In *“these last days”* God has opened His final chapter of revelation and the medium (Jesus) is the “message” (the Father). **–vv. 2-3**

## B. MISSION INCREDIBLE: The “Exegeted” God

1. He is a “Father” — He Has An Only Son

- a. Of the nearly 900 times the word “Father” shows up in the Old Testament, only 8 are clear references to Yahweh!
- b. Of these 8, nearly all of them are metaphorical references to Yahweh’s relationship to Israel as a nation (cf. Deut. 32:6; Is. 1:2; 30:19; 63:16).
- c. God as “Father” in the Old Testament was always a reference to Him as the source or origin of the nation and only marginally in a relational sense.
- d. By contrast, God as “Father” appears over 180 times in the four Gospels alone:
  - 5x in Mark
  - 20x in Luke
  - 43x in Matthew
  - 116x in John
- e. Jesus taught his followers to relate to Yahweh as their “Father.” He said so 17x in the Sermon on the Mount alone (cf. Matt. 5-7)!
- f. Paul continues this beautiful picture of “Abba” that Jesus began in Gethsemane (Mk. 14:36) in his own development of the doctrine of adoption (cf. Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).
- g. Paul continues this description of God by opening every one of his 13 letters with a reference to God as “Father.” (All but one are plural.)
- h. However, Jesus also made it very clear that *his own* relationship to Yahweh as “Father” was one of equality, *not* mere familiarity.

(1) 26x in John’s Gospel Jesus refers to “my Father.”

(2) Because he was the “Son of God,” Jesus claimed the authority to do what only God could do:

- give life, even to the dead (Jn 5:21)
- judge all humans (5:22)
- demand the honor given to God Himself (5:23)
- will call the dead back to life in the resurrection (5:25-29)
- that he is the source of eternal life (5:24, 39-40)

- i. We have to be careful to continually remind ourselves that Jesus came to “exegete” the *Father*, not himself:

- (1) He came to do the *Father’s* will, not his own:

*“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” – John 6:38*

- (2) He spoke the *Father’s* words, not his own:

*“For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.” – John 12:49*

- (3) He came to reveal the *Father*, not himself:

*“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” – Matt. 11:27*

- (4) He was the exact representation of the *Father*:

*“Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” – John 14:9*

### C. MISSION INEVITABLE: The “Exegeting” Church

1. God has inseparably linked His “name” to His people:

*“Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” – Isaiah 43:4-7*

2. It is possible for those “called by His name” to be arrogant, live in sin and turn their backs towards God:

*“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” – 2 Chronicles 7:14*

3. It is possible for those “called by His name” to “exegete” God in a way that causes the world to hate Him:

*“For, as it is written, ‘The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’” – Romans 2:24*

4. Jesus made it clear that the lives of those who call themselves by His name “exegete” the *Father* and affect what the world believes about Him:

*“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” – John 17:20-23*

5. This is the clear expectation of God for His people:

*“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.” – Ephesians 5:1*

*“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called...” – Ephesians 4:1*

*“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” – Colossians 1:9, 10*

6. It is tragic that we have reduced the idea of testimony to “Christian behavior” instead of the accurate “explanation” (i.e. exegesis) of the character of God.

#### D. Incarnation, Apologetics and “Exegeting” God

1. Incarnation & Truth: a Two-Sided Coin

a. Truth can be, and must be embodied:

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” –John 1:1, 14*

b. Truth can be seen and experienced, not just apprehended and believed.

c. Propositional Truth (i.e. words) is judged by logical consistency, valid and true arguments.

(1) What we call “evangelism” involves propositional Truth.

d. Incarnational Truth (i.e. lifestyle) is judged by personal integrity, the congruence of words and conduct.

(1) What we call a “witness” involves incarnational Truth—an observable, verifiable life.

e. Hypocrisy is incongruence between these two forms of Truth in the life of one who claims to be a son or daughter of God.

f. Jesus’ harshest words were towards those who neglected incarnational Truth yet defended propositional Truth!

*“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.” – Matthew 23:13*

g. His criticism was *not* because of their behavior as much as its fruit; They misrepresented God.

h. Our passion should be the same as Jesus,’ to “exegete” the Father:

*“I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” – John 17:26*

—Y E S H U A I N F O U R D I M E N S I O N S—

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