

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 124 – May 4th – John 3:22-4:6

Works frequently referenced in these notes on John

Barrett, CK	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , London, SPCK, 1967
Beasley-Murray, GR	<i>John</i> , <i>Word Bible Commentary</i> , vol 36, Word Books, 1987
Carson, DA	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , Leicester, IVP (Apollos), 1991

Verses 22-30

Carson comments, "This is the fourth successive section to point out ways in which Jesus fulfils and surpasses Judaism: in 2:1-11, Jesus provides new wine that vastly surpasses anything that contemporary Judaism could afford, and renders obsolete the stone jars of purification; in 2:12-25, Jesus displaces the temple and thereby intimates that the temple's proper role is best seen as an anticipation of the ultimate point of the mediation between God and man; in 3:1-21, Jesus fulfils prophecies of a 'water and spirit' regeneration, and proves in his death to be the ultimate antitype of the snake 'lifted up' in the desert; and here (3:22-30) Jesus surpasses John the Baptist and any baptism or rite of purification he may represent. In the next chapter (4:1ff.), the uniqueness of Jesus will be set against movements that extend beyond the boundaries of Palestinian Judaism."

Verse 22

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν, καὶ ἐκεῖ διέτριβεν μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐβάπτισεν.

Μετὰ ταῦτα Sanders suggests that the plural indicates a longer period of time than the singular.

γῆ, γῆς f earth

The phrase εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν causes problems for many since the preceding incident took place in Jerusalem, i.e. in Judea. The following are some of the suggestions:

- i) These verses are misplaced. Verses 22-30 should be read immediately after 2:12.
- ii) There is a break between vv 21 & 22. The one incident did not occur immediately after the other.
- iii) The phrase above means out of Jerusalem and into the Judean countryside (so Beasley-Murray, Carson).

ἐκεῖ there, in that place
διέτριβω remain, stay

Verse 23

ἦν δὲ καὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων ἐν Αἰνῶν ἐγγὺς τοῦ Σαλείμ, ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ, καὶ παρεγίνοντο καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο·

ἐγγὺς adv near
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water
παραγίνομαι come, arrive, appear

"The verbs are impersonal: people came and were baptised" Barrett.
The overlap between the baptising activity by John and that of Jesus (or more accurately his disciples, cf. 4:2), shows Jesus' ministry taking up and carrying forward that of John.

Verse 24

οὕτω γὰρ ἦν βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν ὁ Ἰωάννης.

οὕτω not yet
βεβλημένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
βαλλω throw, place
φυλακῆ, ἡς f prison, imprisonment

Cf. Mk 1:14. It would appear that the events narrated in the first three (or four) chapters of John took place before Jesus' Galilean ministry.

Verse 25

Ἐγένετο οὖν ζήτησις ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν Ἰωάννου μετὰ Ἰουδαίου περὶ καθαρισμοῦ.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γίνομαι
ζήτησις, εὖς f discussion, controversy

The ἐκ means that the dispute arose from, originated with the disciples of John.

μετὰ Ἰουδαίου/ Ἰουδαίων. There is good and ancient textual evidence for both the singular and plural readings. Barrett argues that the singular is more likely original since it is the more unusual form – unique here to John.

καθαρισμός, οὖς m cleansing, purification

The debate may have been about Jewish purification in general, but it probably related also to baptism. It would seem at least to have given rise to questions concerning the baptisms (and therefore also ministries) of John and Jesus.

Verse 26

καὶ ἦλθον πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ·
 Ῥαββί, ὃς ἦν μετὰ σοῦ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ᾧ
 σὺ μεμαρτύρηκας, ἴδε οὗτος βαπτίζει καὶ
 πάντες ἔρχονται πρὸς αὐτόν.

ἦλθον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3 pl ἔρχομαι
 περαν prep with gen beyond, across
 Ἰορδανης, ου m Jordan River
 μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify

πάντες ἔρχονται πρὸς αὐτόν sounds like an
 exaggeration produced by resentment since
 John was still attracting crowds (v. 23).

Verse 27

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰωάννης καὶ εἶπεν· Οὐ δύναται
 ἄνθρωπος λαμβάνειν οὐδὲ ἓν ἂν μὴ ἦ
 δεδομένον αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

ἀπεκρίθη Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
 ἀποκρίνομαι answer, reply, say
 δυναμαι can, be able to
 εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

οὐδὲ ἐν 'not even one' i.e. 'not a single thing'

ἂν if; ἂν μὴ except, unless
 ἦ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἰμι
 δεδομένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
 nom/acc s διδωμι

The verse could be understood in one of a
 number of ways:

- i) To *him* could mean the believer. No one
 can come to Jesus and receive blessing
 unless God directs him. Faith is a gift of
 God (cf. Jn 6:65).
- ii) To *him* may refer to Jesus and what is
 'given' refer to the believer. The believer is
 God's gift to Jesus (cf. 6:34; 10:29). The
 neuter is used of people in 6:37.
- iii) The reference may be to the ministry of
 Jesus – ministry is God given (so Beasley-
 Murray).

The last of these is perhaps the most natural.

'Heaven' is here a reverential periphrasis for
 God.

Verse 28

αὐτοὶ ὑμεῖς μοι μαρτυρεῖτε ὅτι εἶπον· Οὐκ εἰμι
 ἐγὼ ὁ χριστός, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἀπεσταλμένος εἰμι
 ἔμπροσθεν ἐκείνου.

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω

Cf. 1:20

ἀπεσταλμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
 ἀποστελλω send, send out

ἔμπροσθεν prep with gen before, ahead of

Cf. 1:26-34.

Verse 29

ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην νυμφίος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ φίλος
 τοῦ νυμφίου ὁ ἐστηκὼς καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ,
 χαρὰ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὐτὴ
 οὖν ἡ χαρὰ ἡ ἐμὴ πεπλήρωται.

"This verse may be taken as a simple parable.
 At a wedding, the 'best man', important though
 his functions may be, naturally and gladly
 gives place to the bridegroom; similarly John,
 important as his work in preparing the way has
 been, must give way to Jesus, and to do so is
 no pain but joy to him. It is possible however
 that though this interpretation is true it is not
 complete. John can hardly have been unaware
 that in the Old Testament Israel is occasionally
 regarded as the bride of God (e.g. Isa 62:4f; Jer
 2:2; 3:20; Ezek 16:8; 23:4; Hos 2:21); in the
 New Testament the Church is the bride of
 Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-7:31f.; Rev 21:2;
 22:17). The Baptist is made to indicate that not
 he but Christ is the head of the New Israel."
 Barrett. Cf. Mark 2:19.

νυμφη, ης f bride

"Jesus by his teaching and baptising is
 assembling his church." Barrett

νυμφιος, ου m bridegroom
 φίλος, ου m and φιλη, ης f friend
 ἐστηκὼς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s ἵστημι
 stand

Can describe the attitude of a servant, cf. 1
 Kings 17:1.

χαρα, ας f joy, gladness
 χαρω rejoice, be glad

χαρὰ χαίρει resembles the use in Hebrew of
 the infinitive absolute to emphasise the verb.

ἐμος, η, ου 1 s. possessive adj my, mine
 πληρωω fill, make full

"The use of πληρουν with joy is characteristic
 of John: 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; cf. 1 John 1:4; 2
 John 12." Barrett.

Verse 30

ἐκείνον δεῖ αὐξάνειν, ἐμὲ δὲ ἐλαττοῦσθαι.

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must

Implies a necessity rooted in the purpose of
 God.

αὐξανω and αὐξω grow, increase
 ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγω

ἐλαττω make lower; pass. become less
 important

"The last and most magnificent words of
 testimony from John. Coming from the last of
 the prophets they indicate, in Bultmann's
 words...., 'The old epoch of the world has run
 its course, the eschatological age is
 beginning'." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 31

Ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν. ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστίν καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς λαλεῖ· ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν·

ἄνωθεν from above, again

"This verse carries on the thought of verses 22-30 – Jesus and John are now contrasted as 'He that is from above' and 'he that is of the earth'; but it also looks back to the Nicodemus dialogue (vv.1-21). The main theme of that dialogue was the new birth from above (ἄνωθεν) by which alone man can enter the new world of the kingdom of God... There is a new birth ἄνωθεν because Jesus is ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος." Barrett. Beasley-Murray thinks it doubtful that the Evangelist is contrasting the ministry of John the Baptist and that of Jesus. "Rather the discourse draws to its climax with declarations of the supremacy of the revelation through the Christ over all other prophets and prophecies." Carson, however, is happy to see the immediate reference as the Baptist, "In the immediate context, John the Baptist 'must become less' (v. 30) because he is *from the earth* and therefore *belongs to the earth* (the two phrases signify origin and kind respectively). Inevitably, he *speaks as one from the earth*: he called people to repentance and to baptism in water, but he could not reveal heaven's counsels, nor could he offer regeneration from above, the long-promised renewal of water and spirit (v. 5). His references to the Holy Spirit were cast as what another would be and do (1:32-34)."

ἐπάνω prep with gen. over, above, more than

λαλεω speak, talk

The second ἐπάνω παντων ἐστίν, as also the τουτο of the following verse, is omitted from many significant manuscripts and versions. Barrett comments, "The effect of these omissions (which, for practical purposes, may be taken as one variant) is to combine the two verses so that we must translate: 'He who comes from heaven testifies that which he has seen and heard.' The short reading has very good early attestation and may well be correct. It is rightly remarked that v.31c merely repeats v.31a; but this is in fact perhaps the strongest argument in favour of the longer reading. John's style is marked by repetition ... and the repetitiousness which here offends the modern reader may have already offended the ancient copyist, and perhaps especially the ancient translator. The variant makes no substantial difference to the sense of the passage as a whole." Barrett.

Verse 32

ὁ ἑώρακεν καὶ ἤκουσεν τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖ, καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτοῦ οὐδεὶς λαμβάνει.

ὄραω see, observe

"It does not seem possible to distinguish between the perfect and the aorist." Barrett. "The language appears to include reminiscence of preincarnate existence; yet such passages as 5:19-20, 30 speak of a continuous fellowship between Father and Son as the source of all his speech and action. The mysteries of incarnation and Trinity are alike involved here." Beasley-Murray.

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing

This verse is a generalisation of what was said in the Nicodemus' dialogue (v.1) but also in the Prologue (1:5, 10f).

"There is a tension entailed in the 'everyone' of v 26 and 'no one' of v 32, which is eased in v 33. The first statement relates to the success and the superiority of Jesus in his ministry over that of John, the second to the tragedy of Israel's rejection of Jesus, which however, has at no time been complete (v 33, cf. 1:5, 10-13)." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 33

ὁ λαβὼν αὐτοῦ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐσφράγισεν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀληθὴς ἐστίν.

λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω

The οὐδεὶς of the previous verse is not without exception (cf. 1:11,12).

σφραγιζω seal; affirm to be true

"σφραγιζειν is used again at 6:27 (these two places only in John); there God seals, that is to say accredits, Jesus as his trustworthy messenger; here man gives his assent to the same fact." Barrett.

ἀληθης, ες true, truthful, honest, genuine

To accept Jesus is to accept God's testimony since he is the revelation of God. To reject him is to make God a liar (cf. 1 Jn 5:10 and Jn 12:44-50).

Verse 34

ὃν γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖ, οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν τὸ πνεῦμα.

ἀπέστειλεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἀποστελλω send, send out

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing

μετρον, ου n measure, degree, quantity

The addition of ὁ θεός as the subject of the verb διδωσιν, though secondary, is most probably a correct interpretation. "It is because God gives the Spirit to Jesus in no measured degree but completely that Jesus speaks the words of God." Barrett.

Beasley-Murray comments, "The saying of R. Aha (*Lev. Rab.* 15.2) is often cited: 'The Holy Spirit who rests on the prophets, rests on them only by measure,' for one writes only one book another writes more. To the immeasurable gift of the Spirit to the Son of God corresponds the perfection of the revelation through him." Cf. Heb 1:1-2.

Verse 35

ὁ πατήρ ἀγαπᾷ τὸν υἱόν, καὶ πάντα δέδωκεν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for
δέδωκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s διδωμι
χειρ, χειρὸς f hand, power

Cf. 5:19-47; Matt 11:27.

Verse 36

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· ὁ δὲ ἀπειθῶν τῷ υἱῷ οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν, ἀλλ' ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐπ' αὐτόν.

ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever

"Means properly 'to be disobedient'; but John (who uses it here only) seems to use it in the sense 'not to believe'; see the parallel expression v.18, ὁ μὴ πιστευων." Barrett. Beasley-Murray, however, writes, "It is better to retain its proper meaning; the disobedience to the gospel here mentioned is parallel to the disobedience to God's commands in vv 19–21."

ὄψεται Verb, fut midd dep, 3 s ὄραω see
ὀργη, ἡς f wrath, anger
μενω remain, stay, abide

The present tense here may imply:

- i) The wrath of God is upon all since all have sinned. When a person comes to faith in Christ that wrath is lifted – Christ has endured it in their place. For those who do not believe, that wrath remains.
- ii) Wrath remains in the present and will bear fruit in the future in judgement (cf. v.18).

Both thoughts may be present here.

Carson sums up the contrast in this verse, "Believers already enjoy the eternal life that will be consummated in the resurrection of their bodies at the parousia; unbelievers stand under the looming wrath of God that will be consummated in their resurrection and condemnation."

Verse 1

Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἤκουσαν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ὅτι Ἰησοῦς πλείονας μαθητὰς ποιεῖ καὶ βαπτίζει ἢ Ἰωάννης

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω

Some authorities (including P⁶⁶ P⁷⁵ B) read ὁ κύριος instead of ὁ Ἰησοῦς (κ and Western tradition). The former is less likely, since scribes would not correct κύριος to Ἰησοῦς; moreover, apart from the doubtful 6:23, κύριος for Jesus occurs only at 11:2 prior to the resurrection narrative.

πλείων, πλείον or πλεον more
ἢ or, than

Verse 2

– καίτοιγε Ἰησοῦς αὐτὸς οὐκ ἐβάπτισεν ἀλλ' οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ –

καίτοιγε although, and yet

"The parenthesis is commonly believed to be an insertion by a later editor, possibly to avoid Jesus being viewed as merely another baptizer like John, or even his imitator (in Haenchen's view, because baptism prior to the sending of the Spirit was meaningless to the Evangelist). Such scruples are needless. The tradition of Jesus baptizing need not be resisted (see on 3:22). That Jesus remitted the task of baptizing to his disciples is comprehensible. Paul did the same (1 Cor 1:14–17). But the structure of the sentence in vv 1–3 is admittedly awkward. It is really an itinerary fragment, and in v 3 it has a significant parallel in Matt 4:12." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 3

ἀφῆκεν τὴν Ἰουδαίαν καὶ ἀπῆλθεν πάλιν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν.

ἀφῆκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀφημι
leave

The Baptist may have been imprisoned and this also may have prompted Jesus to withdraw (cf Mk 1:14).

παλιν again, once more

Verse 4

ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

ἔδει Verb, imperf indic, 3 s (impers) δεῖ
impersonal verb it is necessary
διέρχομαι pass through, go through

"John's statement is confirmed by Josephus: *Ant* 20:118: It was custom of the Galileans (ἔθος ἦν τοῖς Γαλιλαίοις), when going, at festivals, to the holy city, to journey through the land of the Samaritans... *Vita* 269: Samaria was now under Roman rule and, for rapid travel, it was essential (ἔδει) to take that route (sc. through Samaria), by which Jerusalem may be reached in three days from Galilee. John's ἔδει conveys no more theological significance than Josephus's; the route was desirable." Barrett. Beasley-Murray acknowledges the comment by Josephus but adds, "In this Gospel, however, as in the synoptics, necessity laid on Jesus generally hints of the divine will for him: he goes through Samaria not only for safety, but to accomplish the work assigned to him by the Father (vv 32, 34). The mission to the Samaritans was unplanned by Jesus but willed by God."

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth

I.e. noon.

Verse 5

ἔρχεται οὖν εἰς πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας
λεγομένην Συχάρ πλησίον τοῦ χωρίου ὃ
ἔδωκεν Ἰακώβ τῷ Ἰωσήφ τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ·

πολις, εως f city, town

πλησιον prep with gen near

Συχαρ is usually identified with modern Askar, which is about one mile north of Jacob's Springs, which is under the shadow of Mt Gerazim where the Samaritans had their temple in 400 BC – though it was destroyed in 192 BC.

χωριον, ου n piece of land, place
ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

Cf. Gen 33:14. "Jacob's well is perhaps the most identifiable site in modern Israel connected with the ministry of Jesus. It stands at the foot of Mt. Gerizim and is very deep. To this day the traveler (or tourist!) may drink from it." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 6

ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ πηγή τοῦ Ἰακώβ. ὁ οὖν Ἰησοῦς
κεκοπιακῶς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοπορίας ἐκαθέζετο
οὕτως ἐπὶ τῇ πηγῇ· ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη.

ἐκει there, in that place

πηγη, ης f spring, fountain; well

κεκοπιακως Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s

κοπιαω work hard, become tired

ὁδοπορια, ας f journey

καθίζω sit down

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way

"οὕτως: either 'in this tired condition', or, more probably, 'at once', 'without more ado'. See Liddell and Scott." Barrett.

ὥρα, ας f hour