

CONCLUSION:

–“*WAIT! Jesus standing stark naked in a river for all eyes to see! Jesus at a festive party filling goblets with more wine for people to have a good time! What scandalous behavior!*” BUT, maybe we are the scandal-makers, letting our own cultural taboos of today not only interpret Scripture for us, but fashion a conception of Jesus and of God’s will that the Bible doesn’t teach. If an epiphany is meant to get our attention these two epiphanies of Jesus should really do the job! –**God loves epiphanies, because He loves to reveal His glory. He wants to reveal Christ’s glory**, “*the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” And He wants an epiphany of that glory in us, revealing the glorious “*grace and truth*” of Jesus to the world.

3-01-04-Epiphanies of Christ

Epiphany, incarnation, manifestation, revelation,
John 1:14

God loves epiphanies, because He loves to reveal His glory.

INTRODUCTION:

–*Epiphany* [*manifestation, appearance, revelation*] is that season in the Church year dealing with the manifestation of Christ to the world.

–*Epiphany* is important because of its relationship to the character and heart of God. Because God loves epiphany, we have *the Bible*, we have *the Incarnation*, we have the *Holy Spirit* indwelling us as our Teacher.

HOM.idea. Text: John 1:14 (NKJV), *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

–We’re going to look at two passages dealing with “Epiphanies of Christ” (**title**) where God’s glory is revealed to the world in Christ.

Passage #1– John 1:29-34 (NIV). The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, **the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** This is the one I meant when I said, “A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.” I myself did not know him, but the reason **I came baptizing** with water was **that he might be revealed** to Israel.” Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.” I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

I. At Jordan the Lamb of God Was Revealed

A. First, back to Genesis to review the Fall of the 1st Adam...

1. The promise of the woman’s Seed– Gen 3:15 (NKJV), And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”
2. Sin’s penalty was death– Gen 2:17 (NKJV), “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (*death was an effect of both the act and fruit*)
 - a. act– Rom 6:23a, For the wages of sin is death (in *spirit & body*).
 - b. fruit: knowing good and evil independent from God. (in *mind & morality*, making *reasoning false & morality faulty*)
3. Death’s postponement through atonement [*covering*]-
 - a. God provided *sacrificial coverings*– Gen 3:21, The LORD God

made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. (they made “aprons” to cover their genitals, God made “tunics” to cover their whole bodies *which were condemned to death*)

- b. Death alone atones! (plant products still unacceptable)– Gen 4:3-5a. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. (Later, the law of Moses reaffirmed animal sacrifice for atonement).

B. John’s baptism of Jesus was the presentation of the 2nd Adam

1. He was presented naked, like Adam [The strict Jewish Mikvah rite required totally nude baptism, to symbolize the nakedness of Adam and Eve before they sinned; and the early church kept this up for a few centuries]
2. Presented as the end of animal sacrifices (no more atonement [covering])– “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”)
3. Presented as Rescuer from Satan’s power, “who will baptize with the Holy Spirit” (restoring spiritual life to us by rescuing us from the false spirit that had brought death by leading us into sin...)

C. What is our place in an epiphany of Christ?

1. How did John see his life? “the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed.” (our service is not about us!)
2. Do you see your activities in life this way? “The reason I came _____ was that Christ might be revealed.”

TRANS: Nothing is covered up in the entire naked universe. All of creation declares God’s glory. But the epiphany of Christ’s naked baptism at Jordan far exceeded even the glory of God’s image shining out from our naked 1st parents in Eden. The glory revealed in Christ brought God’s “grace and truth” to a world that needed sin removed (not just covered up) and Satan’s dominion crushed. We, like John, are to see our lives as vehicles for revealing Christ to the world. We need to join him in saying, “I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

Passage #2– John 2:1-11 (NIV), On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.” “Dear woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding

from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

II. At Cana the Glory of God Was Revealed

A. What about the presence of Jesus at a festive celebration?

1. How do we conceptualize Jesus: Was He fasting and praying or a part of the festivities? (Jesus always seemed to be radically departing from man-made religious stereotypes of His day.)
2. God’s glory shines where needed most– Mat 9:11-12, When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. (People party when starved for joy!)
3. He defended celebration– Mat 9:14-15a, Then John’s disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them?” (He told what to celebrate: His presence!)

B. Was Mary wrong to trouble Jesus when the wine ran out?

1. His response, “My time has not yet come,” didn’t stop her from bringing people to Jesus for help, instructing the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” (God’s first response is not always His last.)
2. He made not just more wine but the best. (“But wasn’t the sin of overindulge a danger?” Yes, sin can always spoil fun. But He put a higher priority on perpetuating healthy merrymaking than on preventing the possibility of its misuse. His miracle was saying [from Bill & Ted’s Excellent Adventure], “Party on, dudes!”)

C. Making wine at a celebration party was “the first of his miraculous signs” by which “He thus revealed his glory.”

1. Do we avoid certain social gatherings because we fear being associated with sinners? Jesus didn’t, He loves epiphanies! [one pastor started going to bars to witness, and some people got converted!]
2. Do we bring Christ when we go to social festivities? If not, when the fun runs out, people won’t get a chance to experience real celebration, which is always the presence of Christ!