

Poynton Parish Church January 2015

Home Group Notes 2

John 1:6-13 In the beginning

Introduction

In John's time and place, the religious landscape was confusing: groups of JtB's followers as well as mainstream Jews and pagan Gentiles.

1. If one end of a line is 'reaches out and takes all of the initiative' and the other end is 'sits back and takes no initiative', where along the line would you put God's relating to humans?
2. **Read John 1:1-5** Who are the initiative takers in last week's verses?
3. **Read John 1:6-13** Who are the initiative takers in this week's passage? How is the initiative taken?
4. What responses is God looking for? What responses does he receive?
5. Consider the phrases John uses to present Christianity: 'receiving the true light', 'believing The Word'. The good news seems to be that true religion is about receiving a gift brought to us by God's initiative, not us discovering our own truth.

Some identify a gap growing within Western Christianity between those who follow 'revealed religion' and those who follow 'discovered religion', and that this is the cause of the most significant divisions amongst us. Discuss.

6. Which other gospels put John the Baptist at the beginning? How does John the Baptist help us grasp why Jesus came?
7. When John uses the phrase 'the light' in vv.6-9, what is he saying?

In Acts 19:1-7 there is a fascinating exchange between Paul and some disciples who identified with John the Baptist's baptism but didn't seem to have heard his teaching on the Holy Spirit or the one to come. In which region were these followers? Might this help explain the deliberate clarity of John in v8?

8. In v.10 the world is described as belonging to Jesus. And in v.11 the people are his own. In what ways was Jesus rejected by his own?
9. Verses 12-13 are often used to encourage Christians to be confident, humble, and excited. How do the verses achieve these three things?
10. In John 3, Jesus talks about people being born again when they become his followers. Does this help you see what is being said in vv.12-13?
11. How has this passage helped you? And what focus will you take away with you?

Prayer Points

Thank the Lord that he wants all people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ

Praise Jesus as the source of light and life

Thank the Lord that he takes the initiative in order that humans and God can be reconciled

Pray for us as we read and study and are changed by John's gospel

Pray for the people of Northern Nigeria, innocent victims, complicit collaborators, government authorities, powermongers and murderers.

Pray for those with ebola in West Africa and elsewhere

Pray for Rob and Peter as they prepare to go to Tamil Nadu, for the preaching training conference and for Rob's meetings with Mary, Pastor Stephen, Pastor Vincent, Thomas and Vivi