



Minutes With Messiah

Volume 23, Issue 9

Web Site: <http://www.minuteswithmessiah.com>

July 2022

ARE YOU THIRSTY?

Thirst is a natural condition for people. If we don't keep drinking water we get thirsty. Sometimes we are thirsty just because we think we ought to be. When I was in college, a group of us would regularly go to the local Sambos Restaurant (they don't exist anymore) and work on homework. We went there because they had coffee for ten cents, with unlimited free refills. Once a week somebody would buy a full meal, just so they wouldn't kick us out. We drank a lot of coffee because it was available. Most of the time, we drank it because we convinced ourselves that we were thirsty. After I joined the Navy a couple of years later I ended up having only thirteen cups of coffee in a 22 year career. I haven't had a cup of coffee since 1984. I drink a lot of tea instead. Sometimes I do so because I am thirsty, and sometimes because I think I ought to be. The problem is, coffee and tea end up dehydrating you, so you have to drink plain water to make up for it. Caffeinated drinks actually make you thirsty.

In John 4, Jesus had a conversation with a woman who was thirsty. She didn't know it but she was thirsty in more ways than one.

Jesus was sitting by a well when a woman came at about noon to draw water. In most places at that time there was no running water in houses. People went to the well to get water and store it in large jugs in their houses. This woman came about noon, probably because she did not expect anyone to be at the well. She was somewhat of an outcast in the town of Sychar.

Jesus was thirsty. He asked her for some water. After some discussion, he said that he could give her living water.

To a Jew, or even a Samaritan, living water would be important. Living water is flowing water. For this woman, a stream of living water would be valuable. She wouldn't have to suffer going to the well in the midday heat, or suffer the looks of her neighbors if she went in the cooler times. Living water would be the equivalent of our water on tap. This woman knew the value of that. She even said, "Give me this water, so I don't get thirsty." (Jn 4:15)

What she did not realize was that Jesus was speaking metaphorically. The living water he promised

would be "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." It was a wellspring of salvation. People thirst for God. Jesus had told the people, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." (Matt 5:6) Most people are thirsty and don't even know it. As it turns out, this woman learned that she was more thirsty for God than she was for water.

Later, Jesus used this same idea. During the seven days of *Sukkot*, the Feast of Booths, the priests would draw water from the pool of Siloam amid great pomp, and pour it on the altar along with wine. During the last day of one such feast, Jesus preached about living water.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.) (Jn 7:37-39)

Jesus made the libation ceremony personal. If you are thirsty, go to him to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Not water carried in a golden pitcher to be poured on an altar once a year. Spiritual water flowing daily in your life. Water of salvation. Water that keeps you on the path of righteousness.

He told the people at the feast to come to him for that spiritual water. He told the woman at the well that he could give her that living water. We have become used to having water on demand in our houses. Whether thirsty or not, we can get water. That is not true in much of the world. Many people still have to go to the well for their drinking water. We can give them living water. We can give them God's word. But that also means that we should not take living water for granted. We should appreciate the word of God in our hearts.

CONTENTS

Are You Thirsty?	1
Mystery of Godliness	2
Church Interrupted	4

All articles Copyright 2022 by Tim O'Hearn unless otherwise noted. The ideas expressed in these articles are those of the authors and are not to be considered the doctrine of any specific congregation or eldership.

MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

People don't agree. On anything. If you say the sky is blue, somebody will argue that it only appears blue because of some trick of optics and light refraction. If you say $2+2=4$, somebody will point out that while that is true in a base 10, or even base 5, system, in a trinary system $2+2=11$. Some people just seem to be born contrary. Without controversy we wouldn't have our political systems. As W. S. Gilbert put it in the musical *Iolanthe*, "That every boy and every gal/ That's born into the world alive/ Is either a little Liberal/ Or else a little Conservative!"

Paul makes a statement that he says is without controversy. Of course, you will find many people who disagree with his statement. God, Jesus, and every follower thereof would agree with his statement "without controversy."

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles,

I must be good because I don't kill, steal, or dis my parents.

believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Tim 3:16)

Even some non-Christians would agree that the mystery of godliness is great. They just might not agree with Paul's statement of what that mystery is. That mystery consists of six principal items.

Manifest in the Flesh

Truly the incarnation is a great mystery. Why would an all-powerful, all-knowing God appear in human flesh? Why would he have,

being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. (Php 2:6-7)

To many, the incarnation is one of the sticking points in their acceptance of the gospel. It seems to make no sense. But to the biblical writers it made perfect sense.

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal 4:4-5)

Part of the answer is that the Jewish people could not keep the Law of Moses. The only way they could be

reconciled to God would be if someone were to become a Jew and live the law perfectly. Jesus had to be born Jewish. That doesn't answer the whole issue of the incarnation, but it answers why he was born into the family in which he was born.

The writer of Hebrews goes further in explaining this mystery. Jesus had to become a better high priest than the ones under the Law. He had to offer better sacrifices than the Levitical priests.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. (Heb 5:8-9)

It is that sinless perfection that was the object of the incarnation. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb 9:22) The blood of mere animals was limited in its efficacy. What was needed was human blood from a sinless individual. "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb 9:26) For there to be godliness, there had to be an incarnation.

Justified in the Spirit

Most people seek justification in the flesh. They want to be declared righteous because of what they do. "I'm just as good as that hypocrite." The main fault, if there was one, with the Law of Moses was that it encouraged self-justification. Any law on earth encourages people to say, "I must be good because I don't kill, steal, or dis my parents." James pointed out the flaw when he said, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (Jas 2:10) It is impossible to keep the Law.

Jesus, on the other hand, was not justified in the flesh, although he did live a sinless life. He was declared righteous because that sinless life came from a spirit of righteousness. As the Son of God, he was righteous, but he was "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom 1:4)

Seen of Angels

Angels played a significant part in the life of Jesus. From birth to resurrection, Jesus was seen by angels.

Even before his birth, angels had a role. An angel prevented Joseph from leaving Mary, and later prevented Herod from killing the child. (Matt 1,2) An angel announced to Mary that she was going to be the mother of God's son. (Lk 1) When Jesus was born, angels announced his birth to the shepherds.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. (Lk 2:9-13)

As Jesus approached death, he prayed in Gethsemane. "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." (Lk 22:43)

Angels were even involved in the resurrection. It was the angel of the Lord that rolled back the stone from the tomb after Jesus was risen. (Matt 28:2) Angels waited inside the tomb to announce the resurrection to the women. (Matt 28:5-7) Interestingly, they did not wait for Peter and John to get to the tomb; they were not there when Peter entered. (Jn 20:6-7)

Angels were also there on the last day Jesus spent on earth. At least we presume they were angels. "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel," (Acts 1:10) and announced that Jesus would return the same way he had left.

Preached to the Gentiles

Jesus had to come into the world as a Jew, as shown previously. So how does being preached to the Gentiles fit into the mystery of godliness?

Paul wrote often about the mystery. When he did so, the mystery included the opportunity for the Gentiles to be saved from sin.

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. (Eph 3:4-6)

Paul lived in a time dominated by what are called the "Mystery Religions." These groups taught that only the initiated could know the full teaching of their religion. Common people could know a little, but the higher-ups could know all the secrets. This characterizes many cults today. Paul taught, on the other hand, that the secrets, the mystery, could be known by all. It was no longer just the Jewish people that could know the secrets of God. It was preached to the Gentiles. Everyone had access to God and the knowledge of God.

Believed on in the World

There have been many messiahs through time. Even in our time we have had men claiming to be the

Messiah. A Roman officer even suspected Paul was a false messiah.

Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? (Acts 21:38)

Paul was not that man. Paul would never claim to be a messiah, because he followed the Messiah. He knew that Jesus even told his followers not to believe the false ones that were to come. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not." (Matt 24:23)

Daniel had predicted that the Messiah would come and be killed. (Dan 9:25-26) He even predicted the time it would happen, the time when Jesus lived. But he

How does being preached to the Gentiles fit into the mystery of godliness?

also predicted, in answer to Nebuchadnezzar's dream, that the kingdom of the Messiah would cover the whole world.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (Dan 2:44)

Received Up into Glory

God sits on his throne in heaven. There is a place of honor at his right hand. Jesus sits in that place of honor. He spent his time on earth, died, and was raised back to life. Forty days later he fulfilled the mystery of godliness by ascending into heaven. (Acts 1)

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:34-36)

Jesus was received up as predicted by David. There he took his position sitting at God's right hand. The writer of Hebrews says Jesus is superior because of his glory and his ascension to the place of honor.

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb 1:3)

Paul said all this was "without controversy." Another appropriate phrase might be "without a doubt." We know Jesus showed the mystery of godliness because of these facts. We do not doubt.

CHURCH INTERRUPTED

Paul and I were in Troas with some friends. Most of them had gone ahead, but Paul and I stayed in Philippi until after Passover. It took us five days to get to Troas. The winds were contrary, not like the time we had traveled the other way in just a day or two. We weren't going to stay here long, but we did wait about a week.

It was still the first of the weeks leading up to Pentecost, and on the evening after the Sabbath we met with the disciples in the upper room of a house. Let me be a little clearer. This was the uppermost room of the house. This was not the guest room, like the crowded one when the Teacher was born or the place he took his last supper before he was executed. This was an even higher room, like the one where he met the apostles after his resurrection. We were on the third level of the house.

The nine of us in our party greatly expanded the congregation. There was little space left in the room. Some people were even sitting in the open windows.

Because of the added people, they had also added more oil lamps. More flames, more heat. Most people didn't mind. It was early spring, and the evenings were cool.

Paul knew he was leaving on Sunday. To his Jewish mind, this was already Sunday for it had started at sundown. He had a lot to say to the local congregation. He had started speaking soon after everyone had gathered together. He was still preaching as midnight approached.

Suddenly, there was a commotion over by one of the windows. It is not unusual for people to fall asleep during the preaching. Even Paul could not keep everyone awake. He was actually not the most eloquent of speakers, so he was used to sleepers. In this case, a young man had

fallen asleep early in his speech. Now as midnight approached he was no longer just nodding. He was deep in sleep; so deep, in fact, that he had fallen the two and a half stories to the ground.

By the time we got down to where he lay, someone had identified him as Eutychus. They were taking him up to prepare him for burial when Paul came down. Paul had them put the lad back down on the ground. He laid down on top of him. As a rabbi, he was familiar with this method of reviving people. Elisha had used this method to bring the son of the woman of Shunem back to life. If it was good for Elisha, Paul must have figured it would be good for him. It is not a cure I would try, but I probably would have just declared him dead.

The young man stood up. I examined him. He had no broken bones, no bleeding. He appeared to be in perfect health, although still a little sleepy. Eutychus translates as fortunate, and he certainly was fortunate.

We went back up to where we had been meeting. Some preachers might have taken that as a sign that they were speaking too long. Not Paul. He continued preaching until dawn, another six hours. I say preaching, but it was more of a discussion over food. During that time we also participated in the memorial that the Teacher had instituted at his last supper.

Most of us then boarded a ship. Paul chose to walk the ten hours by foot to Assos, where we took him onboard. Perhaps he wanted some quiet prayer time after bringing the boy back to life.

(Taken from Acts 20:6-13)

Timothy J. O'Hearn
737 Monell Dr NE
Albuquerque NM 87123