

W461A_Finish_Work_of_Christ_27.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open book for the Wednesday dinner hour service. Under the covering title, the finished work. We have been pursuing this subject for many months. We first of all noticed that the six days creation ended at the Sabbath and the work was finished. And then we read in the New Testament that the Father Worketh hitherto and I work, said the son, because the work of the father and the son is redemptive and not creative. The creation was finished. The redemption is still going on and we have discovered that this question of the finished work, while our thoughts very naturally go to the cross, for there our saviour bowed his head and said It is finished. And we rightly commence all our hopes of salvation and redemption and acceptance and peace at the Cross of Christ. But you remember, don't you, that in this Psalm, this 17th chapter, the great Prayer, he said, the hour is come. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. Well, now, of course, you could say, Well, that meant to say that there were so near so Emily and the cross was now almost in sight that he could say that. And at the end of this chapter 17, he says, I have declared unto them thy name. And if you subdivide the sections of this John 17, you'll see a reference to the name of the father coming into most of the sections.

[00:01:42] So let's come back again for a moment. We've only just started. Looking at John's gospel in this series, we have had a run over of the testimony of the eight signs and their bearing upon the story, and now we are looking at this meeting of the one that follows at what is called the prologue or the preface of this Gospel. Chapter one verses 1 to 18. Now, I don't know whether you're anything like I am, but sometimes I'm guilty of missing the preface and plunging into the book. Well, then there comes a moment when you think, Oh, I made a mistake, didn't I? I ought to have read the preface because then I should have known a little better why the writer is taking a certain line. Well, that may be forgivable if it's a man's writing and you haven't got much time. But we are dealing here with the words which the Holy Ghost teaches and we are on holy ground and we mustn't think anything is superfluous and can be forgotten or passed by. We have four gospels, four gospels, four accounts of one life and one ministry, but from four different angles. That, again, is a challenge to us. Some of the best of God's people have spent any amount of time trying to make a harmony of the four Gospels and all the time the only one who could have done it was God himself who didn't.

[00:03:14] So it's far better for us to observe the things that differ in the four Gospels. Learn that instead of trying to do the impossible. Now, Mark's gospel has no genealogy because he sets forth the servant of one of the key words of Mark's gospel is immediately. And he ends up with the Lord working with them. Even the Lord in glory is still working. The last verse of Mark and He goes to the beginning, but not the beginning that John goes to. He is very first verse is the beginning of the gospel. That's where he starts. But when we come to Matthew. We come to the gospel that sets forth the key. And the great question after the genealogy, which makes it obvious that he is in the line of David. The great question is where should he be born? That is king. And we taken to Bethlehem. When you come to Luke's gospel. You discover that he says Savior? Where Matthew says King many times. Where John the Baptist says repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Or when Christ himself says repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Luke says, Repent for the forgiveness of sins. And instead of stopping at David or Abraham, the genealogy in Luke goes back to Adam. And he's the only one apart from Paul who mentions Adam in the New Testament. So now we've got three different phases of that wonderful life, death and resurrection.

[00:04:56] Accomplishing three different aspects of the one great purpose of God. And yet there's one more. When every apostle and evangelist mentioned, as far as we know in the New Testament had died, John was still living over 90 years of age and he was prevailed upon. This is what we read in the writings of the period to write his account. And we've got what we call John's gospel. Now this preface, the first 18 verses tells you in somewhat philosophic sort of language what the rest of the gospel is going to unfold, because it's not the ordinary way of speaking of a person by the name of a word. Is it a logos? But you would if you are acquainted with the writings of the Times, you'll know that just about that period there had been some philosophic speculations with regard to the nature and being of God, and they'd actually used this word logos. Now there are two words in the New Testament that can be translated Word one Rhema is that which is flowing and it may be. Oh, very easy to listen to. But when it's all over, there's nothing much in it. I hope mine's not like that anyhow. And the other one is the word logos, which of course is akin to our word logic. And it has to do with reason and purpose and explanation. So I'm going to ask you to look at this chart which you have in front of you, setting out the prologue as far as I'm able in the limited space, and you'll see that it says.

[00:06:34] In the beginning was the word. The word was. And the word was with God. And I've got against that the word cross. And then it says the word was God. So we now getting more light upon the nature and being of God, who in the beginning said, Let there be light and there was light. For we are now told that this one who is looked upon as the man. Christ Jesus. Although he was born at Bethlehem. If they'd quoted that prophet correctly in the ears of Herod, they would have added whose goings forth have been from of old from Everlasting. So this was not his first appearance in life. It was his first appearance in flesh. But right back in the beginning, he was there. The wisdom of God, the word of God. And when God spake. Here's the word. He was the medium through which the creative word went forth. Well, now, if you look at the bottom of the chart of that piece anyhow, I'll leave the rest of it out. You'll see that he's come back on himself. Does he say in the beginning was the word were the very last word is he hath declared him. Now, that is what he said. I have declared thy name and will.

[00:07:59] He has declared it. That's what a word is for. I don't think you would come to this meeting this afternoon if all we did was I stood here and looked at you and you sat there and looked at me. You say, Well, goodness me, I don't think we're going to keep that up. However faulty my method may be. There is an attempt, isn't there, on my part, to make the book speak. And on your part to hear. Well, that's what Christ said. He said, Look, Christ is not only King. He's not only servant, he's not only the man, but he's the explanation of God. And if you say, I don't need any explanation of God, you're one by yourself. Friends. For the ones who study the Word of God, most are those who have the biggest problems with regard to the nature of God. For the more you know of him, the less knowable he becomes. For his immensity is beyond our appreciation. And then he stoops. He stoops. And when he spoke to Moses, the man speaks to his friend, The similitude of God, did he behold? And when you ask what is God like? Oh, I'm glad to be able to say he's Christ like. We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And in the next thing is this. He says he was in the he was he declared him.

[00:09:26] But who did he declare? So shall we read that 18th verse to make sure that we don't put these stress on the wrong word? No man hath seen God at any time, and that is at any time refers to every reference in the Old Testament where a man is said to have seen God. This cancels it out. There must be an explanation, but it rules it out. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the father he has declared him. To whom does the word him refer? Oh, you say God. Oh,

no, no, no. No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father, the father he has declared him. And that was his great declaration. So when Philip at last said to him, Show us the father, and it sufficeth us. He said, have been so long time with you and have you not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me Hath seen the father. The father and show in John 17. He says, Father, the hour is come. And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. So it begins. You see on that note. And it ends on that note. Now look. Let's look again. I drew your attention to the word whiz in the first verse.

[00:10:58] The word was with God. Now, the word with in the New Testament translates quite a variety of different expressions, and they all have their meaning. There are two particular ones. Meta. Means after that is to say one after the other. Like a row of houses, but soon is together with all living in the one house you see. That's different, isn't it? So we have the word metaphysics. Aristotle wrote the book on physics and then he wrote another one to go with it, and he called it metaphysics. That's one next to the other. But this is neither better nor soon. This is the word cross and it means towards. Now, as I've given the illustration, I'll give it again if our brother Canon gives me a lift to Euston Station when I'm going to Scotland, as I do hope he will. And as the train just begins to move out from the station, he waves. This is right out. I'm with you all the time. I don't sit there saying, Well, I wonder how he's going to be with me all the time. And he left on the platform. I know what he means, don't I? He says, I'm with you. Heart and soul. My prayers are with you. I know what you're going for. I agree with you. That's what it says here. Whatever was the purpose of God? He was with him, not merely standing with him or next to him.

[00:12:19] We can't have those local meetings with him, heart and soul. So if you look at John ten, where it speaks. About this unity, you'll see that it means with regard to whatever one does, the other one is in full agreement. John ten. He says, verse 27, My sheep hear my voice and I know them. And follow me and I give unto them eternal life. And they shall never perish. Neither shall any man. Pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all. And no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand. Now you see, none shall pluck them out of my hand and none shall pluck them out of my father's hand. I and my father are one. Well, then people lift that one verse out and argue the point as to the what it means about Father and I. Or one one in purpose. Just as he says, the one thing he says over and over again, whatever

God the father has sent me to do and I am going to do with just absolutely one, nothing can turn him away. Nothing can distract him. Nothing can add to it or take away from it. And so we have that desire for oneness expressed. You remember in those marvelous words in John 17 I in them and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one. It's the gold of the ages that there should be at long last laid at the feet of the father.

[00:13:53] A perfect universe that God may be all in all. So one of the great outstanding features of John's gospel is the revelation of God as the Father and the revelation of the God as the Father is intimately related to the fact that he is the Son. We have to look at that presently. But you will be noticing possibly at the bottom of this structure that I've got a curious wording there, God only begotten. How you might challenge that because it's so extraordinary. Our version says The Only Begotten Son will you know that from time to time, manuscripts have been discovered that go back very much earlier than the ones that were in use 350 years ago when the authorized version was being compiled. And right in the very time with all the controversy was going on, this manuscript was in use and is quoted. Now, whether we can say we understand what it means. The only begotten God, I don't know. But the fact that it's saying something which says elsewhere confessedly great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. That does mean something. So let us say to ourselves, aren't we glad that we have a gospel that while it was, contains things that are beyond our Ken? We sang a hymn quoting from Ephesians just now. The breadth and length and depth and height leave us in the middle of immensity.

[00:15:29] But still, isn't it good to know that God has told us that immensity and also given us this, that the last revelation before the end comes of the character and nature of God is not in Him, is not Jehovah, is not El-shaddai or any other name of God, but this one, the Father, the Father, and the nature of the redeemed, when at long last we are all there was going to say when at last we're all home and was anticipating it, wasn't it? That's what it's going to be. Ultimately, not a gigantic temple with worshippers standing afar off, but a father with his redeemed family. And then we shall understand why it is that the ultimate revelation in the New Testament of the nature and being of God is the father and the Son. And he said, I came to declare that and I will declare it. That was the supreme object. That was the work that he came to do in this as I finished it. Because if you're not satisfied with the testimony that this one gospel gives concerning the fatherhood of God, there's nothing else in the New Testament, nothing

even in Paul's epistles that can give any further. But you're sure you realize that this is so? Well, I think that's about as hard as I can go for our first section of this study.