

Sunday 19th April 2015 AM Having a spot of Hubble trouble – John 14-16

Title: Having a spot of Hubble trouble – John 14-16

Purpose: To grasp the work of the Holy Spirit as second Advocate and His relation to Jesus as first Advocate.

INTRODUCTION

The trouble with Hubble

Next Friday will be the 25th Anniversary of the HST – and by HST, I don't mean the High Speed Train (that's nearly 40 years old) - no what I mean is **NASA's launching of the HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE**.

The project was attended with much hype, and expectation.

The possibilities of what Hubble would be able to see, (since it's vision would not be obstructed by the earth atmosphere and by light pollution), was potentially breathtaking.

At a mere \$2 billion dollar price tag – this was clearly not cheap, however the rewards would be well-worth it.

The Hubble Bubble was certainly a very big one.

Well the telescope launch was a success, everyone breathed a sigh of relief, they took a first picture with the telescope and **“horror of horrors” it was BLURRED!!**

Initially they put it down to some adjustments that needed to be made – but very quickly they knew that **the MAIN MIRROR WAS THE WRONG SHAPE!!** In effect the telescope was **“SHORT-SIGHTED”!!**

Things reached such a low on the project that some of the scientists involved, on realising that they had managed to put **a \$2 billion pink-elephant into space**, drowned their dismay and drunk themselves into a stupor in the control room such that they had to be removed by the security staff!!

For other scientists looking on, the prospect of joining the Hubble Project became seen as the equivalent of “scientific suicide”.

So what began as the **“HUBBLE BUBBLE”** of enthusiasm had clearly BURST and all that seemed left was a legacy of **“HUBBLE TROUBLE”!!**

This morning – last but one in our series

The section of Scripture that we are coming to this morning seems to have more than a little resemblance to the Hubble Story as we will shortly see.

Today, we come to **the last but one study in the series** that we have been doing in John's gospel - just looking at encounters people had with Jesus.

And I want, for this next half-an-hour or so, to focus around the dinner table of the Last Supper.

We are going to look at the disciples and what would turn out to be their final encounter with their Lord before he was taken from them to be crucified the very next day.

Last Supper – all 4 gospels

Now the Last Supper, being such a hugely key event, is not surprisingly in all of the 4 gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

What it represents is the institution, by Jesus, of this new Ordinance which we call the Lord's Supper (or Communion, the Eucharist, various names etc.).

John's account different

What is of particular interest is how John's gospel comes at this, "final encounter" (pre-crucifixion).

You see John does *not* choose to tell us anything at all about the institution of the Supper:

- we don't hear anything about take eat this is my body given for you do this in remembrance of me
- we don't get the wine being passed around and its symbolism being explained

Q. Necessarily short?

Given this rather major omission you could easily conclude that this means that the Last Supper episode is going to be a necessarily brief one.

Actually you could not be further from the truth because John is going to give over 5 or so chapters to these events:

- in chapter 13 – we are given **the foot-washing episode** and Jesus explaining a **new commandment** that he gives to them to "**love one another**"
- then in chapter 14 thru to 16 we have a **3 chapter final teaching session** focussing a lot around **the Holy Spirit**
- then lastly in chapter 17 we have the **longest recorded prayer of Jesus**

It is only then that they head off to Gethsemane for the final action to take place when they will all be scattered.

Putting ourselves into Jesus' shoes

I want us for a moment to try and transport ourselves into the situation that was prevailing just in the final moments of that Passion Week, the week leading upto Jesus suffering:

- there was, at the beginning of the week all the razzamatazz that went with Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem riding on a donkey that no one had ever ridden to the shouts of applause and the waving of palm branches etc.

It would not have missed the attention of the Jews that this event was almost parallel to a similar victorious and triumphant entry to Jerusalem 200 years earlier on by Simon Maccabeus, one of the great Jewish hero figures.

This is what the book of First Maccabees (in the Jewish apocrypha) has to say:

"On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the year 171, there was a great celebration in the city because this terrible threat to the security of Israel had come to an end. Simon and his men entered the fort singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving, while carrying palm branches and playing harps, cymbals, and lyres." (1 Macc 13v51)

- now, just a couple of days later, various alarms are sounding:

- Jesus himself sounds the first note – he says at the end of chapter 13

"My children, I will be with you only a little longer Where I am going, you cannot come..."

- in response, the disciples start to show that they have no clue what he is talking about and also that they don't

really have any clue about their own strength or weakness – Peter insists that he will follow Jesus even to death if necessary.

- Jesus sounds what is really another rather alarming note when he says in chapter 14 and verse 9:
“Don’t you know me...even after I have been among you for such a long time?”

The launch sequence already started

Q. So I don’t know if you are getting the picture here?

The launch sequence is already started – it is too late to turn back now – and Jesus hand-picked team that had studied under him for 3 years are all pretty clueless – they don’t know themselves and they certainly don’t understand Jesus.

- It’s exactly like **the Hubble Bubble** – all that **joy** and **hype** and **triumphalism** of the entrance into Jerusalem
- It’s exactly like **the Hubble Trouble** – all **horribly out of focus** – a project that now spells **religious suicide** – Jesus himself spelled it out:

John 16 verse 2 “...a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God...”

So then – Q. Is this a hopeless situation, or can things somehow be recovered or be corrected at the last moment?

Introducing the ADVOCATE

Well this is where John 14 through to 16 comes in and here Jesus introduces one called: **“THE ADVOCATE”**.

We read of him 4 times in these 3 chapters.

Let me read the verses and I’m going to read them from the latest edition of the NIV:

John 14 verse 16 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another advocate** to help you and be with you forever..”

John 14 verse 26 “But **the Advocate, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 15 verse 26 “When **the Advocate** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—**the Spirit of truth** who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.”

John 16 verse 7 “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, **the Advocate** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth

Now we aren’t left in the dark as to who this Advocate is – we are told that He is the Holy Spirit, that He is the Spirit of truth.

However, Jesus chooses to introduce the coming of the Holy Spirit by giving him another name – the Gk. **“PARAKLETOS”**.

Parakletos explained

Let me just take a moment to explain that term.

Parakletos is the noun that comes from the Greek verb “parakaleo” – which, as you might figure, has 2 parts:

- the **‘PARA’** part, which is the prefix – and means “alongside” and we have this in English too – e.g. **paramedic** or perhaps a **paralegal**
- and then **‘KALEO’** which means to call, command or direct

So, put in perhaps **overly simple terms** – a paraclete is one **“called alongside to help”**.

Now because this word can have some flexibility and range of meaning – the different Bible translations have not all chosen to use the same word: some have adopted **helper** OR **counsellor** OR **comforter** BUT the **latest NIV** (and also the NRSV) use the term **ADVOCATE** which has a more legal edge to it.

Thinking a bit about this word (paraclete) it seems to combine a couple of things that might be ordinarily be in tension:

- you see “to call” or “command” – is really **something active** and not passive – you are calling someone to a truth or a towards a goal
- **however**, to “come alongside someone” – is a lot more on **the passive side** – you are coming to provide support, assistance, you are coming to sympathise

This word ‘paraclete’ is very much a UNION of BOTH:

PROPHETIC CHALLENGE, on the one hand,
and **PRIESTLY SUPPORT** on the other.

So to render the paraclete as simply a helper, counsellor or comforter is perhaps to overemphasise the more passive and sympathetic side – and to lessen the more active and directive side.

Now what I want to do for the time remaining is to look at this one called the **ADVOCATE** but to do that properly I would be amiss not to mention the only other verse in the NT that has mention of the “paraclete” and that is also from the pen of the apostle John.

It is not in his gospel, rather, it is in his first letter:

1 John 2 verse 1 “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.

But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate (a ‘paraclete’) with the Father [STOP READING HERE]—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

Now, if that was all the verse said, we would say to ourselves – isn’t it wonderful that the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, is there for us to intercede on our behalf.

But there verse goes on like this “...we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

So what this tells us is that actually we have not just one paraclete BUT two.

So this morning I have just two points:

- #1 – The **FIRST ADVOCATE** – Working in the Court of Heaven
- #2 – The **SECOND ADVOCATE** – Working in the Court of your Heart

So then - #1: (The **FIRST ADVOCATE** – Working in the Court of Heaven) PTO ...

1] The FIRST ADVOCATE – Working in the Court of Heaven

When Jesus first brings up the subject of this advocate this is what we read:

John 14 verse 15-17a “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **ANOTHER ADVOCATE** to help you and be with you forever— **the Spirit of truth...**”

Thus far – we have learned that the Spirit – this Advocate is:

- **FIRSTLY, ALONGSIDE** – he is the PARAclete
- we learned that he is not just alongside but he is also the **ADVOCATE**
- the third thing that we notice is that he is not just an advocate but he is **ANOTHER advocate**

Now the Greek language is very expressive, which is good for us, given our NT’s are all in 1st century common Greek – and in that language there were 2 words which you would translate as another – there was ‘heteros’ – which was **another of a different kind** and then there was ‘allos’ which means **another of the same kind**.

The word used here is “another of the same kind” – so Jesus is saying that there will be another one of the same kind as myself that will be coming to take my place.

It is just one more reiteration of the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who are co-equal and of the same divine essence.

Our first advocate

Q. So how does our first advocate work?

We know a lot about Jesus, but Jesus being called our advocate is perhaps a title we are not so sure about.

There’s a lovely, encouraging verse in Hebrews which seems to picture the work of Jesus as our Advocate before the Father in the court of Heaven – it’s **Hebrews 7 verse 25** which reads:

(Hebrews 7 verse 25) “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, **because he always lives to intercede for them.**”

And it is easy to gain the impression that when we sin, and of course we all do, every single day, in fact every single hour if we are honest – then Jesus comes to the Father and on our behalf does some sort of legal representation – and He says to the Father:

“Well, I need to let you know that Hedley, my client whom I represent, has erred yet again and so I want to plead on his behalf that you would show **MERCY** and that you would desist from **JUSTICE** even though I know that that is what he really deserves – thankyou gracious Father – I know you always hear my prayers.”

Q. Have you ever thought something like that?

But really this isn’t a very satisfactory way of looking at things. For a lawyer, for an advocate to come before the judge and appeal for his clemency, for his patience, to appeal to his feelings of sympathy and the fact that he may be moved to give yet another chance – is not really a very satisfactory way forward.

The advocate is not really advancing a very strong case.

1 John 1v9 – God is JUST

There is another important verse in 1 John just before the one we have been looking at – it comes in:

1 John 1 verse 9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and **JUST** and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

You see when Jesus, our FIRST ADVOCATE intercedes for us, on account of our sins, before the court of Heaven – he pleads not some rather weak case based on the judge feeling kind, benevolent and willing to extend a bit of mercy – not at all – Jesus comes instead with a PERFECT and an INFALLIBLE CASE to present.

Jesus comes and says, I have a perfect case and because of this I request that the demands of the Law are seen to and that Justice is done whereby my client must be acquitted, whereby my client must be accounted as righteous.

Q. What is this perfect, this infallible case?

Let’s go back to that quote in 1 John 2:

1 John 2 Verses 1-2 “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an **advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.**

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Because we are united to Christ, because we are IN Jesus, then His perfect record of Righteousness is accredited to us and our sins are paid for by Him.

So there is no longer any debt to be paid and therefore the only course of action is for the Heavenly Judge to acquit anyone that Jesus the FIRST ADVOCATE represents to Him.

Let’s move on to the OTHER ADVOCATE - #2:

2] The SECOND ADVOCATE – Working in the Court of your Heart

IF the FIRST ADVOCATE is speaking **TO God FOR you**
THEN the SECOND ADVOCATE is speaking **TO you FOR you**

Throughout these chapters in John (which make up the FAREWELL DISCOURSE) – Jesus keeps pointing that the Spirit is to take all the things that Jesus has done on our behalf, all the things that the disciples had not yet really grasped and make them clear by way of TEACHING and by way of REMINDING.

Let me read to you a section from Warren Weirsbe on this passage:

“Our Lord was always careful to give His disciples the right amount of truth at the best time. This is always the mark of a great teacher. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher today, and He follows that same principle: He teaches us the truths we need to know, when we need them, and when we are ready to receive them.

When you compare John 14:26 with 16:13, you see the wonderful way that God arranged for the writing of the New Testament Scriptures:

- The Spirit would “**remind**” them of what Jesus had taught them; **this gives us the four Gospels**
- The Spirit would also “**guide**” them into all truth; and this would result in **the epistles**
- “**He will show you things to come**” refers to the prophetic Scriptures, especially **the Book of Revelation**

It is essential that we see that the work of the Spirit of God is never divorced from Jesus Christ or the Word of God.”

Working in the court of your heart

So the work of the Second ADVOCATE is being done in the courtroom of your heart.

He works to convince and persuade you as to the wonders and delights of Jesus your Lord.

Jim Packer, (that helpful theologian who wrote “Knowing God”) writes of the Holy Spirit:

“The Holy Spirit’s distinctive new covenant role, then, is to fulfill what we may call a **FLOODLIGHT MINISTRY** in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.... Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder, on Jesus, who stands facing us.

The Spirit’s message is **NEVER**, ‘Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me,’ **BUT ALWAYS** ‘**Look at him**, and see his glory; **listen to him**, and hear his word; **go to him**, and have life; **get to know him**, and taste his gift of joy and peace.’

This wonderfully illuminating and persuading role that the second advocate works in us, deep in the courts of our hearts, is such that Jesus is able to say – there in John 14:

John 14 verse 16-18 “...I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**”

In what sense is Jesus going to come to the disciples, well the most likely sense is in connection with the coming of the SECOND ADVOCATE.

After the Holy Spirit is, in other places, called the Spirit of Christ.

Q. If you are a Christian this morning, I wonder whether you have learned to listen:
to your SECOND ADVOCATE about your FIRST ADVOCATE?

You see if you are a multi-millionaire and you have a wad of £10 notes in your pocket but later you realise that you have lost one – Q. Do you get concerned? Not at all – because there are many more where that one came from. It is nothing – you will not lose any sleep over it. For you everything is settled, everything is taken care of – the fact is you don’t have a care in the world (at least financially).

Q. But what about your life as a Christian?

- someone does an unkindness to you – Q. Are you going to all cut up about it?
- someone else gets the job promotion you were going for, someone gets to that bargain you were going for ahead of you, someone is more popular than you, someone is smarter than you, more good looking than you – Q. Is this going to be robbing you of sleep – constantly popping up in your mind and stealing every ounce of peace you have?

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude where I began with **Hubble**:

- the disciples certainly enjoyed that brief moment inside the **“Hubble Bubble”**, when Jesus had been triumphantly processing into Jerusalem amid shouts of:

“Hosanna in the highest – Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”

- BUT ONLY DAYS LATER – they are evidently in serious **“Hubble Trouble”** because all they seem to know about Jesus is highly confused and very blurry.

The way forward for this project does seem as though it is going to be nothing much more than a **“SAD SUICIDE”**.

A happy ending

Well – the Hubble Story, the story of this \$2 billion “short-sighted” space telescope, as you may know, actually had a happy ending.

The scientists, after initial despair, produced a pair of glasses that were able to correct the vision so that it’s sight become crystal clear and truly brilliant.

And this is very much akin to the amazing work that the Holy Spirit – our SECOND ADVOCATE, performs for us . He is **like a pair of glasses OR contact lenses** that brings everything wonderfully into focus.

The question I would then leave you with this morning is this AND it is two-fold:

- **#1 – Q. Have you come to know & treasure the FIRST ADVOCATE?** (The Lord Jesus Christ)

Q. Is He representing you – pleading his perfect and infallible case before His Father in the Courts of Heaven?
- **#2 – Q. Have you come to know & treasure the SECOND ADVOCATE?** (The Holy Spirit, The Spirit of Truth)

Q. Are you accustomed to hearing the wonderfully illuminating case that He regularly presents before the court of your own heart – persuading you of the riches that are yours on account of the work of the FIRST ADVOCATE?

IF Jesus has and presents an INFALLIBLE CASE in Heaven
THEN the Spirit presents and produces an INFALLIBLE PEACE in our Hearts

Perhaps no great surprise that Jesus can say, to these scared and fuzzy-sighted disciples:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you....Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

AMEN